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AN  
APPEAL AND ADDRESS  
TO THE  
YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,  
HELD IN  
LONDON, A. D. 1814.

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THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA

FROM 1776 TO 1876

AN  
APPEAL AND ADDRESS  
TO THE  
YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,  
HELD IN  
LONDON, A. D. 1814.  
BY  
THOMAS FOSTER,  
ON HIS  
EXCOMMUNICATION,  
FOR ASSERTING THE  
UNITY AND SUPREMACY  
OF  
GOD THE FATHER.

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“ For this cause *was I born*, and for this cause *I came into the world*, that I might BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH.—If I bear witness OF MYSELF, my witness is not true. There is ANOTHER—THE FATHER, who hath sent me—that beareth witness of me—of whom ye say THAT HE IS YOUR GOD.” *Jesus Christ.*

“ For there is ONE GOD, and one Mediator between God and men, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.—To us there is BUT ONE GOD, THE FATHER of whom are all things.” *Paul.*

“ The GOD of our Fathers raised up *Jesus*, whom ye killed, having hanged him on a Cross: him HATH GOD EXALTED to his right hand, to be a *Leader* and a *Saviour*, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” *Peter* and the other *Apostles.*

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AND SOLD BY R. HUNTER, (SUCCESSOR TO J. JOHNSON), ST. PAUL'S  
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1815.

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## PREFACE.

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IT was my intention to wave the right of appeal to the Yearly Meeting, till the unexpected circumstances stated in the ensuing pages, 3—22, altered my determination. The King and Parliament are not above listening to the complaints of obscure individuals, and such condescension is expected from them under the British Constitution ; but a standing Committee of the Yearly Meeting, which had inadvertently, as I am willing to believe, contributed to do me an injury, pertinaciously refused to hear my complaint, even in a respectful letter. Thus situated, and still entitled to exercise the rights of an Appellant, I thought myself called upon to claim them, in order openly to vindicate my character in the face of those who had aspersed it, and to shew the Yearly Meeting how I had been treated by the Society in a collective capacity, both before and *after* my disownment. The latter I wished first to speak to, that I might if possible remove the prejudices excited in my judges, before I entered upon the former.



But silence was peremptorily imposed upon me, as to any thing the Morning Meeting of Ministers and Elders, or the Meeting for Sufferings had done.

The rules, however, respecting Appeals, so positively enjoin a fair and full hearing of both parties, that every other objection which was afterwards made to my exercising that right was overruled, and principally by the firm and impartial conduct of John Wilkinson, then Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, under which name the duties of a Chairman are exercised.

When ecclesiastics of any profession, acting as a collective body, assume to themselves the power of judging their Christian brethren on matters of faith and worship, the history of almost every church shews, that there is scarcely any injustice within their power which they hesitate to commit; though perhaps as individuals, of irreproachable character. The fact is, that when so associated, they place themselves, however unconscious of it, under the baneful dominion of priestcraft, which is so infectious, that as a celebrated writer once said of it, "*one drop is enough to contaminate the Ocean.*"

This exercise of a coercive authority over conscience, in the administration of the discipline originally established in the Society of



Friends, was early apprehended. William Penn thus endeavours to guard against it. "Church government," says he, "must no more be denied, because the Church of Rome pleads for it, than any other truth that she asserts. There are principles held by Jews and Turks in common with Christians, must Christians therefore renounce these *common truths*, or be branded with Judaism or Turcism? Nor is the abuse of a *principle* or *practice* by any Society a reason, why another communion should be abused for retaining or using it." He adds, speaking in the name and on behalf of the Society, "The *power* WE claim and use, differs both in its *nature* and *object*, from the *power* used by the Roman and other churches too: in *nature*, for our's is not *coercive* and *penal* either by themselves or their proxy, the civil magistrate, who is a member of their church. In *object* they differ, because *their authority regards matters* of FAITH and WORSHIP; but that *we use*, ONLY ORDER and THE GOVERNMENT OF SOCIETY. And here I must beseech those into whose hands this may come, to stop a while and ponder with the spirit of meekness and wisdom *this distinction*." In the next page Penn adds, "WE never assumed to ourselves a *faith* or *worship-making*

*power*, nor did any one—ever charge it upon us.—Our case is plain order, NOT ARTICLES OF FAITH ; and the discipline of government, NOT OF WORSHIP.”\*

Had either of the meetings which decided on my case recognized these fundamental principles upon which the discipline was originally established, would they not in effect have said to my accusers. Ye may be right in point of faith, and the person you accuse may be in error, but neither you, nor are we duly authorized to judge of the soundness of his faith towards God ? This is not within the province of our discipline, which regards *only* order and the government of Society—“ *not articles of faith nor matters of worship.*” He professes to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, the anointed of the Father, and in the divinity

\* See the Preface to Barclay's Works, Edit. of 1718, pp. 21—23, first published in 1691. Penn's “ Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers,” was published in 1694. In this work, treating of “ The church power they *own* and *exercise*, and that which they *reject* and *condemn* ;” he says, “ They distinguish between imposing any practice that immediately regards FAITH or WORSHIP, (*which is never to be done or suffered, or submitted unto*) and requiring Christian compliance with those methods that *only* respect church business in its more *civil* part and concern ; and that regard the discreet and orderly maintenance of the character of the Society as a sober and religious community.” Works, vol. i. p. 878.

of his mission—and the obligation of obeying his precepts, and receiving his doctrines as of divine authority.

Why then should ye judge your brother? What rule of the Society do you charge him with having broken? \* Would ye have us countenance your injudicious accusation, and thereby proclaim that the rights of conscience for which our ancestors suffered so much, are no longer respected or even tolerated amongst us? Would ye have us unwisely commit the reputation of the Society, as being accountable for the private sentiments of all those whom it retains in membership? Are ye not aware that this would be to cancel “*the bond of peace*” by which our ancestors were united; and that it is highly probable, not to say certain, that many among us hold sentiments very similar to those you denounce?

Would ye by a rigorous inquisition search out these, and either compel them to recant or disguise their opinions; or would you drive them from our communion? Or, would ye

\* In my Narrative there are copies of all the minutes relative to my case, up to the time of its publication. I have not repeated them, as their import will sufficiently appear in this work. None of these, I may however observe, accuse me of a breach of any rule of the Society, or of disbelieving any scriptural doctrine.

censure and disown some of these, and *let others go free*, and yet pretend that “the rules of our discipline are impartially put in practice?” Depart with this admonition from the judgment-seat, examine your own hearts, and endeavour to learn “*what manner of spirit ye are of.*”

Such I presume would have been in substance the reception of my accusers at the threshold, had the operation of the discipline been confined within those limits, and administered upon those principles on which it was professedly founded. How their accusation was received and acted upon, the following pages will evince. The discipline has indeed, of late years, in many instances been conducted upon widely different principles. Opposite maxims have prevailed among the rulers of the Society, and if they are persisted in, and *tamely submitted to* by the bulk of its members, the consequences are not difficult to foresee.

The question is of no less import to them generally, than whether “the Apostolical order of the church of Christ” is still “the practice and ornament of their Christian Society?” Or, whether the prevalence of a Pharisaic spirit and the love of reputed orthodoxy or the praise of men, have alarmingly



weakened their love of the truth as it is in Jesus, and their estimation of doctrines in proportion to their real importance, and the clearness with which they are laid down in Scripture ?

Those readers who may object to this work as an *ex parte* statement, should be informed that I wished it to contain a fair view of the Respondents' reply before the Yearly Meeting, which was delivered the day after my address, and occupied about three hours and a half. During this time I took notes of what struck me as most material, and especially of the references to the numerous quotations of the Respondents, either for the purpose of criminating me, or of exhibiting their own view of the doctrines of the Society.

From these I prepared a summary of their reply, and almost as soon as this work was in the press offered to submit the *MS.* to them, that any errors in it of which they could have reason to complain might be corrected. The Respondents declined this offer, and did not even acknowledge the receipt of the small part of which I sent them a copy. See pp. 109—111.

I have therefore given no account of their reply at large the day following, of my rejoinder the same evening, nor of the discus-

sion the next day in the absence of the parties. I wish, however, to afford the Respondents a fair occasion for publishing their reply, by dropping the curtain at the close of that sitting which heard my address. If they should incline to annex to it any account of my rejoinder, they shall be welcome to the use of my *MS.* with full liberty to add to it, in the form of notes, or otherwise such observations as they may think proper.

Should none of the Respondents be inclined to publish any account of their reply, I should be disposed to lend a copy of my *MS.* summary of it, to any respectable Friend who might be desirous to publish it, and to avail himself of the assistance of my papers.

I have so frequently expressed as an Appellant, in the plainest and strongest terms I could use, my objection to the imposition of unscriptural articles of faith, in any form, or under any pretext, that it is unnecessary to repeat them here, but as the right of imposing such articles on me, or of expelling me from that Society in which it pleased an all-wise Providence that I should be born and educated, has in reality been the point at issue between my accusers and myself; I would close this preface by expressing my sincere good wishes

for the welfare and prosperity of the Society, and by quoting a very impressive testimony of Jóhn Locke, against subjection to any similar imposition.

After having most clearly shewn from the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, that in the primitive Christian church, no other article of belief was required of converts to the faith that Christ and his Apostles preached, than that “ *Jesus is the Messiah the Son of God,*” he says,\* “ I allow to the makers of systems and their followers, to invent and use what distinctions they please and to call things by what names they think fit: but I cannot allow to them, or to any man, an authority to make a religion for me, or to alter that which God hath revealed. And if they please to call the believing that which our Saviour and his Apostles preached, and proposed alone to be believed a *historical* faith, they have their liberty; but they must have a care how they deny it to be a justifying or saving faith, when our Saviour and his Apostles have declared it

\* “ Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures,” last Edit. p. 147. Johnson & Co. London, price in boards, 3s. 6d, including a short account of the life and writings of the Author, with his celebrated “ Essay for the understanding of St. Paul’s Epistles, by consulting St. Paul himself.”

so to be, and taught no other which men should receive, and whereby they should be made believers unto eternal life; unless they can so far make bold with our Saviour for the sake of their beloved systems, as to say that he forgot what he came into the world for; and that he and his apostles did not instruct people right in the way and mysteries of salvation."



# ERRATA.



Page 34, line 20, for "observed," read *proposed*.

— 72, line 2, note, for " § Mark xii. 29," read *Rom. xiv. 4*.

— 94, line 8, note, for " It was," read *It is*.

— 97, line 30, note, for " of ancients," read *of the ancients*.

— 100, line 21, note, for " he add," read *he adds*.



# APPEAL,

&c.

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By the constitution of the society of Friends, usually called Quakers, the rights of membership are guarded with peculiar care. Every member disowned by any Monthly Meeting is entitled to appeal against its judgment, to the Quarterly Meeting in whose district it is situated.

This right I exercised, and considering the decision of the Quarterly Meeting in my case, as tending to encourage by its influence an intolerant spirit, injurious to the interests of truth and virtue, I published as correct a Narrative of the proceedings as was in my power, that their true character might be generally understood. So far as this decision is acted upon as a precedent, it is evidently calculated to discourage among the members of the society, by the fear of censure and disownment, an open profession of their own convictions concerning the doctrines of the New Testament, or even the religious tenets of the founders and most approved authors of the society.

Much disposed as I was to wave the farther exercise of the rights of appeal, I chose to preserve them

as long as the rules allowed, and therefore gave the following notice

To the Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex,  
to be held 3d Month 30th, 1813.

DEAR FRIENDS,

IT has been with much reluctance on various accounts, that I have at length concluded to give you notice of appeal to the Yearly Meeting against your judgment.

In the exercise of this right, however, I think my resolution is unalterably fixed to occupy but very little of the time of the Meeting, or of its Committee. The probable advantages of *another* personal discussion of the case, do not appear to me important enough, to reconcile me to being the cause of prolonging the sittings of that Meeting to the necessary, and perhaps great inconvenience of many friends.

My object is rather to give the society an opportunity of doing itself justice, by calmly reconsidering a decision, which may soon become a precedent injurious to its welfare, and unfavourable to its progressive improvement, than to urge the reversal of a sentence confirmed by you, which I deem truly honourable to me, *as a Christian*, because, if I understand its import, it disowns me as a member of your religious society, for openly professing my belief concerning Jesus Christ, *in scriptural terms*, and for refusing to adopt *any other*.

The Yearly Meeting in 1794 resolved "not to receive in future any appeal in print, or that hath been printed." I shall *continue* to avoid, to the best of my judgment, any infringement of this rule, but I shall nevertheless hold myself at full liberty, to publish a narrative of the *previous* proceedings in my case, before my intended appeal to that meeting is presented or prepared.

So salutary do I deem it, that all persons in whom judicial powers are vested, should exercise them, as under the eye of the public, or rather with a consciousness that they are liable to publicity, that I should readily wave the privilege of appeal as illusory and of little value, under any system which fettered or prohibited such a right.

Earnestly wishing that we may more and more, to our unspeakable advantage "*let this mind be in*" us "*which was also in Christ Jesus*," I am your sincere friend,

THOMAS FOSTER.

*Bromley, March 29th, 1813.*

This notice being read, *six* respondents were appointed to defend the decision of the Quarterly Meeting, viz. George Stacey, William Allen, Luke Howard, John Eliot, Josiah Forster and Richard Bowman.

At length I learnt that a publication was circulating containing such charges against me, as I could not with propriety pass over in silence, countenanced as the work had been, though previously disposed to avoid any farther controversy with the society.

I ventured however to hope, that by a plain statement and refutation of these charges, though they had been sanctioned by the "Morning Meeting of Ministers and Elders," the appointed censors of the press, and directed to be circulated throughout the society, by the "Meeting for Sufferings," that body might be induced to withdraw its farther countenance from the work. With these views I addressed the following letter

To the Meeting for Sufferings, to be held 11th Month  
5th, 1813.

DEAR FRIENDS,

IN "a list of Friends' books now on sale," published

in your name, pursuant to a minute of 9th month 3d last, "for the general information of Friends;" there is one pamphlet which contains various false and injurious charges and insinuations, tending especially by the countenance you have given it, to prejudice the minds of Friends in every part of the kingdom against me, while the Appeal to the Yearly Meeting, of which I have given due notice, is pending.

This work is entitled, "Remarks suggested by the perusal of a Portraiture of Primitive Quakerism, &c." It was published during the last Yearly Meeting, and sold in common with other Friends' books, at the Clerk's Office, Devonshire House; and, as I now understand by your minute, "with the approbation of the Morning Meeting" of Ministers and Elders.

Soon after it came out, I read it attentively, but without being able to discover its pertinency to the subject of which it treats; and supposing it, *till very lately*, to be merely the unsanctioned effusion of an individual, I did not incline to notice either the palpable misrepresentations with which it abounds, or the author's reasoning, of which it contains some very singular specimens.

When such a production is officially sent forth by you "for the general information of Friends," with a recommendation, that two copies be taken by every Monthly Meeting, and one copy "kept in each Quarterly Meeting," it acquires a claim to notice of which I before thought it wholly undeserving. I nevertheless highly esteem the character of its author, as a benevolent and amiable man and a sincere Christian, but I cannot commend his candour or accuracy as a writer; nor think that such a work merited the distinguished countenance it has obtained. But I solicit your attention to its contents, so far only as they are calculated to excite unjust prejudices, even in the minds of those who may become judges of my appeal. I shall thus trespass upon your time more than I could wish, yet it would



be evidently improper to prefer these complaints, without distinctly specifying the grounds on which they rest.

1. Your approved author begins by asserting that “*MANY* attempts have lately been made by *Unitarian writers* to identify their faith with that of the Quakers, but—sometimes—rather covertly than openly,” and that “The ‘Devotional Extracts’ were given to the world *with this design.*”

Whether the first of these assertions be correct or not, the latter is wholly unfounded. The work alluded to, is entitled, “Devotional and Doctrinal Extracts from Epistles of the Yearly Meetings in London, of the people called Quakers, from the year 1678 to 1810.” Many of you know that long before the Remarks you have sanctioned were published, I avowed myself the Editor of this work, in the Quarterly Meeting which heard my appeal. My professed and real design was not “to identify” the faith of any other class of Christians “with that of the Quakers,” but to evince the general soundness of the devotional language of our predecessors by unexceptionable evidence, and to contribute so far as in my power to “the preservation of my brethren, in an undeviating and consistent profession of that great and fundamental doctrine of the Scriptures, *the unity of God.*”

2. Your approved author says, “*This design of identification* is however no longer *a secret*: it is brought forward in no dubious form in the ‘*Portraiture of Primitive Quakerism*, by William Penn; with a modern sketch of reputed Orthodoxy, and real intolerance, by Ratcliff Monthly Meeting.’”

The design of William Penn in publishing the work here called a “Portraiture” is much too plain to be any “secret,” to those who read it with attention. He intended it as a defence of the unity, mercy and purity of God; and as a confutation of those so generally-believed and applauded doctrines of the

Trinity, a plenary satisfaction and an imputative righteousness. Such was my design in the republication of this Tract, and not to compare, much less "to identify" the faith of those who are usually called Unitarians, "with that of the Quakers." The "sketch" contained not an *ex parte* statement in my favour, but correct copies of all the minutes of Ratcliff Monthly Meeting relative to my case, with a few explanatory notes. Those minutes, and Penn's Tract form a contrast as striking as I can readily imagine.

3. Your approved author adds, "It may perhaps be suspected that this pamphlet was intended to sell as the work of the Ratcliff Monthly Meeting: though candour would instantly reject such a suspicion, *were it not already authorized* by the publication of a version of the New Testament, sanctioned by the name of Archbishop Newcome." The version here alluded to, if I understand your author, is entitled "The New Testament in an improved Version upon the basis of Archbishop Newcome's new Translation." But this is not to claim his sanction in favour of the work farther than is proper, as all deviations from the Primate's text, are carefully marked, and his reading given at the bottom of the page. Nor can this publication, whatever be its merits or demerits, authorize a "suspicion" which your approved author says "candour" would otherwise "instantly reject."

4. He next tells us that "The title given to the 'Devotional Extracts' also, and the manner of its publication, *were equally calculated to deceive*." How so? The title as given above, is, I submit to you, as expressive of the contents of the work, as any I could have chosen. The extracts were selected one or more from each Epistle, from 1678 to 1810. They are generally devotional or doctrinal, and the most appropriate I could find. With what justice then can this title be described as "*calculated to deceive*?"

5. Your approved author however says he "*was*

*himself deceived*," and that "he knows of some others who eagerly inquired after the work, believing it to be sanctioned by the society of Friends." What then? How could the Editor of that work prevent those persons from believing without evidence, or being deceived for want of proper inquiry, when the means were at hand? The conclusion of the preface might have informed them, that the Editor was far from attempting to give his work any other sanction than the pertinency and fidelity of his selection. For he there informs his readers, that "as a knowledge of the name of *the person* by whom this selection was made, cannot assist any one in appreciating its value or the inferences justly deduceable from it, he has not given it. But that if it should be thought necessary in any way to notice this work, the Editor may be called PHILEMON." There was therefore no just ground for representing, that "the manner" in which this pamphlet was published, was in any degree "*calculated to deceive*."

6. Your approved author apparently forgetting his suspicion that the Portraiture, &c. "was intended to sell as the work of the Ratcliff Monthly Meeting," informs us that "as it appears to be brought forward by a person *born and educated amongst the Quakers*, it may be the more likely to pass for a full exposition of their doctrines."

With some persons it may, but not with those who examine before they judge. Such persons as the "deeply thinking men," for whom your approved author tells us he has "often felt compassion," would be likely with all the infirmities he imputes to them to judge better. Nor could any reasonable man consider this tract as containing "*a full exposition*" of any doctrines but those above-mentioned. It professes to treat of no others.

7. After two desultory paragraphs which affect not my reputation, but rather your's who have sanc-



tioned this work, your author tells us that Penn's Sandy Foundation Shaken "professes to attack *all* that is of *mere human authority and invention* in the tenets that relate to the Trinity, imputed righteousness, and the satisfaction and atonement made by Christ."

This is not much amiss, but I think Penn explains his professed design more definitely and correctly in his preface to this work. He there says, he has "endeavoured *a total enervation* of those cardinal points, and chief doctrines so firmly believed, and continually imposed for articles of Christian faith."

8. Your approved author says also, that it "gave *great offence* to professors of different churches" in Penn's time. It did so to *Trinitarians*, but not to his brethren *the primitive Quakers*. Your author adds, "rude as that age was, it did not refuse to William Penn, like the Unitarians of the present, the privilege of explaining his own words: and though he was imprisoned for his book, yet his gaoler was not ordered to put a gag in his mouth, *as his present inquisitors do*, when he would open it for his justification."

No part of this grave accusation, sanctioned as it is by you, is well founded. To republish one of Penn's tracts, is rather to open than to shut the mouth of its author, and to style those who have been so usefully employed "inquisitors," is most absurdly to call names.

9. "We will remove this obstruction," continues your approved author, "and Penn shall *speak for himself*, bringing in his hand 'Innocency with her open face,' which if I mistake not, will occasion some surprize in the minds of those, who have hitherto been introduced to this amiable writer *only through the medium of Unitarian quotation*."

Is it then a distinguishing character of Unitarians, rather to republish a whole work than to risk exhi-



biting the sense of an author imperfectly? It should seem so by the above passage. As to the "*surprize*" your author anticipates in the minds of his readers, should they be persons of much reflexion I conceive it will not be that such a tract as the *Sandy Foundation Shaken*, was selected for republication, but that its author, having therein spoken for himself so ably and scripturally, should under any circumstances have written such an *Apology* for that work. He undoubtedly deemed them consistent with each other, if he was. as I believe him to have been *a man of integrity*. For in the latter, there is no confession whatever that there are any unsound or unscriptural doctrines in the former. Yet so decidedly opposed is it to the doctrine of the Trinity, according to your approved author, that he represents its readers, as introduced to the writings of William Penn, "*only through the medium of Unitarian quotation!*"

10. In order to remove "this obstruction," as he calls it, your author, in the midst of his "*Remarks*" provides his readers with a copy of the aforesaid "*Apology*," but without any comparison of the two tracts, or attempting to vindicate the consistency or sincerity of William Penn in writing the latter, he says, p. 21, "Not doubting that the perusal of the tract here offered to the public has produced very opposite emotions in different classes of readers, I beg leave to offer some few observations on the '*Portraiture of Primitive Quakerism*.' The concluding remark in the author's preface, *plainly declares* that the design of this book is *the identification of the Quaker and the Unitarian doctrines*. Speaking of the '*Sandy Foundation*,' he observes, 'than which I am not acquainted with a more manly and able vindication, in that peculiarly fanatical age of *the pure Unitarian doctrine*.'"

This is comparatively candid, because any attentive reader may see, that the evidence appealed to as so

plain, will not support the conclusion. I did not speak in that place of *the doctrines* of Unitarians generally, but of the *pure Unitarian doctrine*, as it was laid down by William Penn, and defended in that work. This charge therefore is groundless. Nor is that which follows any better founded. The preface and postscript to Penn's "Sandy Foundation Shaken," were omitted as relating to a personal controversy, and as containing other irrelevant matter, of which the two quotations adduced by your author afford "sufficient evidence."

11. In the year 1771, an edition of Penn's *Select Works* was published by the Society, in the preface to which the editors very properly remark, that "Much might here be said on subjects so extensive as the life and writings of our author; but we refrain, lest in offering our own sentiments concerning them, we might seem to be endeavouring to prepossess the reader in their favour." This preface being prefixed to the "Portraiture," your author seems to have most strangely mistaken *the above sentiment*, if not the whole preface, *for mine*; and under this impression he gives the substance of it, marked with inverted commas, as a correct quotation, in the following terms and manner. "Much," says the painter of this Portraiture "might be said on the life and writings of William Penn, but he would not prepossess the reader in favour of his own sentiments." Your approved author then exclaims, "*Of this trait of delicacy let every one form his own opinion*, while I assist this author in examining his favourite identity, by scattering a few more quotations from William Penn."

Be it so. Let every one also judge what dependence can safely be placed on the accuracy of such a writer, or on the discrimination of those who revised and sanctioned his work.

12. Your approved author, under the influence of

equally gross misconception, brings forward p. 28, a much more serious accusation, but without any evidence to support it. He there says, "Though the Quakers have no written creeds, the acknowledgement of which constitutes a sole *right to membership*, yet whoever imagines, *as may well be imagined from the writings of Verax*, that a man *still professing to be a disciple of Mahomet*, may yet be a Quaker, is greatly mistaken."

Without doubt he is. But this defamatory insinuation, that the writings of Verax have a natural tendency to produce such an erroneous notion, is entirely unfounded. Many, if not most of you knew, before the "Remarks" you have sanctioned were published, that I was accused before the Quarterly Meeting of being the author of the writings alluded to; and that a number of passages were adduced from them against me, but that none of these held forth any thing approaching the monstrous proposition, "that a *professed disciple of Mahomet*," may yet be intitled to claim membership in a Christian church.

Such an extravagant idea, countenanced as this accusation is by you, is utterly incompatible with the whole tenor of those works. The one is intitled, "A Vindication of *Scriptural Unitarianism*, and some other Primitive *Christian Doctrines*;" the other "*Christian Unitarianism Vindicated*." Long before the date of your minute, declaring the "Remarks" to have been duly sanctioned, and directing them to be generally distributed throughout the Society, I had publicly avowed myself to be the author of both those works. There can therefore scarcely be a doubt to whom this heavy charge was intended to apply. Yet I may safely challenge any person to cite a single passage in those works, which can in the slightest degree justify this accusation. Such a thought never entered my mind till your approved author suggested

it, much less had I ever expressed it verbally, or in writing.

13. Nor does it appear, as he imagines, from the writings of Verax, "as the assumption of *a new power*, by the Quakers of the present age to expel *non-conforming members*." Verax knew very well that the power of expulsion has been freely exercised in every period of their history, and he believes often unnecessarily and unwisely. The cases of George Keith and Hannah Barnard are very unfitly compared by your author. There is no similarity between them, either as to the points in question, the conduct of the parties disowned, or, of the society, but rather a perfect contrast. George Keith attempted to impose upon his brethren unscriptural articles of faith; Hannah Barnard set up no such pretension. The church evinced an unequivocal disposition to tolerate the speculative errors of the former, although it at length disowned him. The latter was disowned, not for interfering with the Christian privileges of others, but because the church would not tolerate *the conscientious exercise of her own*.

Having finished his observations on the "Portraiture," your approved author says, p. 29, "I would gladly avoid all remark on the Appendix to this little volume. *It is almost impossible to speak of it without being personal.*"

Why so? The proceedings, it is true, relate to an individual. But the general principles on which they appear to be founded, present by far the most important objects for consideration. The soundness of these might be instructively discussed without any personal allusion. For instance, the propriety of accusers questioning persons suspected of holding erroneous opinions on points of doctrine, or, sitting in judgment on their own accusations.—The consistency and utility of unscriptural articles of faith in Protestant churches—of imposing such tenets on pain of



expulsion from religious fellowship; with various other topics equally interesting to the cause of Christian truth, and the rights of conscience might be considered as general propositions, without any personal reference. The documents in this appendix, seem to me such as naturally lead a serious and reflecting mind to such considerations. Your approved author appears to think otherwise, and can hardly speak on the subject, "*without being personal.*" I wish him and you calmly to consider the cause of this.

14. Persisting in this course, after informing his readers that he laments my "perceptions—were not more alive to prudence than to give this appendix to the public," your approved author insinuates, but as usual without any evidence, that I have ventured to "*tell a large body of intelligent people, that they know not what they believe.*" If he, or you can shew I have so done, I will promptly condemn my conduct, as highly indecorous and improper, but I am not conscious that I ever so expressed myself as to deserve such censure.

15. Your approved author reasons thus in the next paragraph, concerning the manner in which he supposes I have acted. "If Verax," says he, "could *persuade* the Quakers to be Unitarians, he might tell the world so, and they would have nothing to complain of against him: but publicly to persist in *this attempt*, in spite of their loudest appeal to the contrary, is, let him clothe it with as much *affected meekness* as he *please*, an act of *great arrogance*.—What is offensive to individuals is offensive to societies. The public is no more to be *compelled* to the yoke of matrimony than an individual, and all attempts beyond the freedom of choice, mar the work they would promote."

Certainly they do. Nor has Verax at any time made such attempts. He may have endeavoured to

“persuade” his brethren the modern Quakers, to adhere to the doctrines concerning the unity of God, which he believes the Scriptures *most plainly teach*, and their ancestors *openly professed*. “Publicly to persist in this attempt”—to persuade, is according to your author “*an act of great arrogance*.” Whether this be a logical deduction, or a scriptural inference, I leave you to consider, as having recommended this work to the general attention of Friends. That it is directly calculated, if not designed to excite powerful prejudices against me, in the minds of many of those who may become the judges of my appeal, cannot I think be doubted. Nor will such persons, generally speaking, be likely to read any of the writings of Verax, or to have any other means of comparing the allegations against me, in this patronized work, with the evidence on which they must rest, if they are in any respect well founded.

In his last paragraph your approved author says, “The writer of these remarks has attempted *no kind of argumentation*.” The natural tendency of this observation, at the conclusion of his work, on those who receive it as being “sanctioned by the Society of Friends,” is surely to impress them with a belief that it contains so correct a detail of plain undisputed matters of fact, as can admit of no question, and on which every reader of it, without farther information is competent to decide.

Whether this, or any thing like this, be the real fact, I call upon you as Christians conscientiously to examine, after maturely weighing the evidence I have thought it my duty, more for your sakes, and that of the Society, than my own, thus to lay before you. Try it by the golden rule of *our common Lord and Master*, and if you find it will not bear that test, hesitate not to act as a sense of justice may dictate.

For my own part I cannot suppose the various accusations against me in the work thus sanctioned,

have been investigated by you, or by the Morning Meeting of Ministers and Elders, *with sufficient attention*. If they had, I am persuaded you would not have given them your countenance.

It is not my place to point out, how the injury of which I complain, may now be most properly and effectually redressed, but it will become your duty to consider this, if, on a review of the manner in which you have distributed and recommended this work, you should be convinced, that you have not only by so doing, injudiciously implicated the reputation of the Society, but contributed to do me great injustice.

Before I conclude, I must say, if the rules of the discipline are to be impartially administered, and “*Defamation and detraction*” really *discouraged*, my claim upon you for reparation *is strong*, and requires your *serious attention*, in proportion to the importance of the station you occupy, the publicity you have given to a work, containing injurious aspersions on my character, and the extent of your collective influence over the Society.

Earnestly desirous of its real welfare and progressive improvement in “*Christian knowledge and the practice of virtue*,” I am sincerely your well-wishing friend,

THOMAS FOSTER.

*Bromley, Nov. 1st, 1813.*

In order to preserve my rights as an appellant, I gave the following notice.

To the Quarterly Meeting for London and Middlesex,  
to be held 12th Month 28th, 1813.

DEAR FRIENDS,

IN the 3d month last I gave you due notice of appeal, but it not being “convenient” to me, to present the same “to the Yearly Meeting next ensuing,” I hereby repeat notice thereof conformably to the 6th rule concerning appeals.

In my former notice I intimated to you, that I meant "to occupy but very little of the time of the Meeting, or of its Committee." Since that time I had almost given up all thoughts of appealing, but now deem it an incumbent duty to claim the *full* exercise of that right, in consequence of a pamphlet containing many unfounded and injurious charges and reflexions on my character, having "been published with the approbation of the Morning Meeting" of Ministers and Elders.

This work is intitled "Remarks suggested by the perusal of a Portraiture of Primitive Quakerism, &c." and is recognized as having been *so approved and published*, by a printed minute of the Meeting for Sufferings, dated 9th month 3d last, which recommends it to be circulated within "each Quarterly—and Monthly Meeting—for the general information of Friends," manifestly calculated as it is, to excite powerful and extensive, but unjust prejudices against me while my appeal is pending.

To remain longer silent after I *at length knew* that the system of "Defamation and detraction" under which I had long suffered, was thus widely extended and openly sanctioned by the constituted authorities of the Society, would in my mind have been a criminal dereliction of an important Christian duty. I therefore feel myself called upon to engage *once more*, in a very unequal and unpromising contest, but remain with best wishes for your present and future welfare,  
your sincere friend,

THOMAS FOSTER.

Bromley, Dec. 26th, 1813.

On this notice being read, it was observed, as I understand by George Stacey, that it was doubtful whether the Yearly Meeting would hear the appeal, on two grounds:—1st. The appellant would be expected to assign some very good reasons why he did not bring forward his appeal at the last Yearly Meeting:—2dly. He had published a narrative of the



proceedings of the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings relative to the case.

As to the first observation Joseph Gurney Bevan, as I am informed said, "It had no weight with him, as the rules allowed appellants to judge for themselves, within the time limited, when it was most convenient to them to present an appeal. As to the other objection, it was not for that meeting to judge of it, but to proceed at a proper time to nominate respondents, as the appellant had given regular notice according to the rules." This was accordingly done.

The following letter will shew in what manner my letter to the Meeting for Sufferings was disposed of.

To Sparks Moline and Josiah Messer.

DEAR FRIENDS,

YOU were, I understand, desired to examine a sealed letter, which I addressed to the Meeting for Sufferings, held 11th month 5th last; and that seeing it came from me and just the beginning of it, you reported, without reading it, that it was not proper to be laid before the meeting, and did not concern them. About three weeks after Sparks Moline gave me this information verbally, and assured me the letter had been ever since in his possession, and had not been read even by himself.

During the conversation between us, I read one passage, which appeared fully to satisfy him, that I had been grossly calumniated in the approved work to which my letter related. He took it back with him, and yesterday informed me, that you had since that time perused it, but remained of the same mind.

He also shewed me a letter on the subject from Josiah Messer to himself, briefly stating his [Josiah's] concurrence in the reasons he had assigned why you declined laying my letter before the meeting.

These reasons are far from being satisfactory to me, and are I think highly derogatory to the character of the Meeting for Sufferings, as a standing Committee of the Yearly Meeting.

I hope you will not however shrink from the duty of furnishing me with those reasons in writing, that I may clearly understand them, and avoid as I wish all misrepresentation. Common civility, as well as justice requires this, and I hope Josiah Messer's letter to Sparks Moline will be carefully preserved, as I may have important occasion to refer to it.

I shall be very ready to meet in any fair manner, the irrelevant accusations it contains whenever Josiah Messer may choose to state the particulars of the alleged misrepresentation, and if his complaint should appear to be well founded, to make reparation, as broad and public as the injury.

I am, with due respect,

THOMAS FOSTER.

*Bromley Hall, Jan. 23d, 1814.*

Receiving no answer to this letter, I concluded that a small junta had taken upon themselves to determine, that my letter to the Meeting for Sufferings ought not to be laid before them; I therefore sent the following letter to that meeting by Thomas Sturge, one of its members.

Thomas Foster, to the Meeting for Sufferings, to be held 2d Month 4th, 1814.

DEAR FRIENDS,

I ADDRESSED a *sealed* letter to you, which was referred 11th month 5th last to a committee of two of your members, one of whom about three weeks after verbally informed me, that *without reading it*, but just the beginning only, they had reported it was not

proper to be laid before you! Since this time, they have been induced to peruse it, and I am *lately* informed are still of the same mind, on such grounds as I think you should be acquainted with.

The letter related to a work which contains unfounded and injurious aspersions on my character, and which, by a printed minute of 9th month 3d last, you certify to have been published with the approbation of the Morning Meeting, and recommend to be circulated, "for the general information of Friends."

Your Committee, much to my surprise alleged, that you are *obliged* to circulate all works which have been *so sanctioned*, that you have no constitutional power to act otherwise, it being the business of the Morning Meeting, to take care that those publications, contain nothing contrary to the doctrines of the Society.

If you really occupy so subordinate a station in the Society, and are so completely under the direction and controul of the Morning Meeting of Ministers and Elders, I have hitherto much mistaken your collective character, as a standing Committee of the Yearly Meeting, empowered to act on its behalf, in the intervals between one meeting and another, in whatever concerns the general welfare and reputation of the Society, which is not otherwise provided for by its rules. Such I submit to you, is the case to which I solicit your attention.

I am aware that the revision of *MSS.* intended for publication, *at the expense of the Society*, has been *long* intrusted to the Morning Meeting, but if any thing palpably exceptionable should escape their notice, in the exercise of this *delicate trust*, which ought to be very judiciously executed, *or not at all*, surely you are duly authorized, on the same being pointed out to your conviction, to decline giving such a work farther publicity, and to withdraw your countenance. The object of my letter was to call upon you calmly

to consider whether the case it states, has not such a claim to your notice, on the broad principles of impartial justice.

Your Committee represent you as incompetent to entertain such a question. *One of them* is a member of the Morning Meeting, and may be strongly biassed in favour of its decision in this instance, and in supporting its claims to authority in matters of faith and worship. *The other*, long after their report to you concerning my letter, professed to be equally unacquainted with your minute, and the work to which that letter related ! It concerns your reputation, and that of the Society, that it should be known, whether you are at liberty in such cases, to act as your own judgment may dictate, or are intirely submissive to the ecclesiastical mandate of others.

In my former letter, I confined myself as much as I well could, to such parts of the work declared by your minute to have so sanctioned, as directly tended to excite unjust prejudices against me, while my appeal to the Yearly Meeting is pending. But I cannot conclude this letter, without pointing your attention to one paragraph in this approved work, which so decidedly holds up “the *common* doctrine of the Trinity,” as according with the principles of the Society, that it represents those, who may wish to give them a character “irreconcilable” to that doctrine, as “endeavouring to consign the Quakers to the invidious condition of the Bat in the fable, neither bird nor beast, *with all its pernicious consequences.*”

What these may be, your approved author has not explained. But they can hardly be any other, than such as every sincere lover of truth should be prepared to encounter, the loss of the praise of men for reputed orthodoxy, the proper value of which, Christ taught his disciples, how to estimate and despise. There can however be no difficulty in ascertaining



where “the *common* doctrine of the Trinity” is to be found. That is, in the *Athanasian creed*. A mass of contradictions and absurdities, too monstrous to have been imposed as an article of faith, during the darkest ages of the Romish church, by any person while living, however great his reputation, in his own name. No; it was the offspring of fraud and forgery never seen or heard of, till long after the decease of its reputed parent, under the sanction of whose name it was introduced.

Yet is this figment of Popery “*the common doctrine of the Trinity*,” thus brought forward under the sanction of an imprimatur rule, as consistent with the principles of the Society! If such be the fact, I may lament it for the sake of many of those who are still your members, but I shall rejoice at my own emancipation. And I know there are many among you, who cannot for conscience’ sake receive this newly-adopted tenet, and bow down to the unscriptural image it sets up, or so teach their children.

Look ye to it, and judge for yourselves whether this be that faith, “which was once delivered to the saints,” and will be finally triumphant, by whomsoever it may be opposed.

This work you may therefore see has other claims to your notice, as you have given it such extensive publicity and countenance, than those which arise out of the injustice it does me. Read, examine, deliberate, and then do that which you believe to be right, but do not in blind submission to the unconstitutional authority of others, refuse to bring your own deeds to the light, and to hear evidence concerning them which is justly entitled to your attention. I remain, with best wishes, your sincere friend,

THOMAS FOSTER.

*Bromley, Feb. 1st. 1814.*

I sent this letter *unsealed*, in order that it might,



according to the usual practice be read in the meeting, without being first referred to a Committee. I was informed how it was disposed of by the following note, but whether referred to the same Committee as my former letter I know not.

“ Thomas Sturge informs Thomas Foster, that he presented his letter to the Meeting for Sufferings, and notwithstanding it was unsealed, after reading the superscription, it was concluded not to read it, but to refer it to two Friends to report upon : who went out with it, and on their return reported *that it was not a proper letter to be read in the meeting* ; upon which it was given me to return to thee, which I do herewith.

Devonshire House, 2d Month 4th, 1814.

N. B. The marked words [those in italics] I believe to be the substance of the report, but not exactly the words, not being correctly clear in my recollection of them.”

Being thus refused a hearing by those, who subsequent to my disownment had contributed as a collective body to the aspersion of my character as a man and a Christian, I had no other prospect of obtaining adequate redress than to claim a hearing as an appellant, in order to remove, if possible, the unjust impressions which had been so systematically and perseveringly made to my prejudice. Under these impressions I applied to the recording clerk for a copy of the existing rules concerning appeals, when I found to my surprise that the Meeting for Sufferings had taken upon themselves to suspend issuing the rules made by the last Yearly Meeting, for the better conducting appeals, and had even refused to several Quarterly Meetings copies of the same. I therefore sent to the next Quarterly Meeting the following letter.

To the Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex,  
to be held 3d Month 29th, 1814.

DEAR FRIENDS,

THE last Yearly Meeting, having as I understand made some fresh regulations concerning appeals, I lately applied to the clerk in whose custody the records are placed for general use, for a copy; that I might as an appellant duly observe them. But in consequence of certain directions given him since that time, he declined granting this reasonable request without your permission, or that of the Meeting for Sufferings.

I am therefore obliged either to risk forfeiting the right of appeal by not attending to those regulations, or to request you, or that meeting to direct the clerk to furnish me with a copy. It appears most regular to apply to you, as the Meeting for Sufferings does not officially know me as an appellant, and might therefore reject any application from me, as informal however proper in itself.

I also request you will authorize the clerk to allow me such access to the records of the Yearly Meeting, as I may judge necessary in preparing for my defence. Some of its judicial decisions and minutes, I have particular occasion to consult, and I trust you will be of opinion, this is a privilege, of which no appellant can be equitably or justifiably deprived.

I remain, with undiminished good wishes, your  
sincere friend,

THOMAS FOSTER.

*Bromley, March 26th, 1814.*

On this letter being read by the clerk, a discussion took place. It was said, as I understand, that the appellant had requested more than the Quarterly Meeting had power to grant, the records being in the custody of the Meeting for Sufferings.

The person who started this objection (J. G. Bevan), should have been reminded, that he never hesitated to send the recording clerk out of the Quarterly Meeting for any part of those records to which he wished to refer, without asking leave of either of those meetings. Nor was the right of inspecting the records ever objected to within my knowledge till lately, but considered as a right to which every member of the Society was entitled.

It appeared, however, to be the decided sense of the meeting, that the requests of the appellant ought to be granted. John Eliot observed, that the respondents being members of the Meeting for Sufferings had of course free access to the records, and he therefore thought it would be unjust to deny the same privilege to the appellant. In this sentiment most of the persons who spoke concurred, but the Meeting for Sufferings not having sent to the Quarterly Meeting a copy of the new rules concerning appeals, and having lately directed their clerk not to permit any other persons but its members, to have access to the records, without their special leave, the Clerk was desired to inform that meeting of my application, and its opinion thereon, also to acquaint me in what manner they thought my requests should be granted.

This conclusion of the meeting was reported to me the same day by several of my friends who were present, and I accordingly expected it would have been promptly complied with. But I afterwards found this was a delusive expectation. For although the clerk understood very well what he was commissioned to do, as the organ of the meeting, he chose to inquire of a friend near him, whether it would not be proper to write a note to the appellant, to inform him of the conclusion of the meeting? This he was advised *in a whisper* would be unnecessary, as the appellant would no doubt apply to him soon enough.

The clerk acted upon this uncandid suggestion,

and although he attended the next Meeting for Sufferings which occurred in due course only three days after, he withheld the communication he was directed to make to that meeting, which separated without noticing the subjects of my letter to the Quarterly Meeting: yet most of its members were present at the discussion upon it, and knew the same were referred to their attention.

By these disingenuous measures, the consideration of the subjects referred to them by the Quarterly Meeting, was deferred till their next meeting, five weeks after, and the appellant consequently deprived during that period of any opportunity to inspect the records, after which if permission were granted, it was easy to foresee it would be of little use, as the Yearly Meeting so soon followed. I however addressed the following letter

To the Meeting for Sufferings, to be held 5th Month  
6th, 1814.

DEAR FRIENDS,

I ADDRESSED a letter to the Quarterly Meeting held 3d month 29th last, requesting a copy of the regulations concerning appeals made by the last Yearly Meeting, and also such access to the records of that meeting, as I might as an appellant judge necessary in preparing for my defence.

These requests were I understand generally allowed to be reasonable. But it was thought most proper for you to give the necessary directions, and their Clerk was officially authorized to inform you that I am an appellant to the ensuing Yearly Meeting.

A few days after your next meeting was held in due course, at which I am told no notice whatever was taken of my application so referred to your attention, although many of you heard my letter read in the Quarterly Meeting, and the discussion thereon.



I should have been much better pleased for you to have taken the matter up spontaneously, without any farther communication from me, however you might have decided upon it.

Thrice have I already had just occasion to apply to you in the character of an appellant, and each time unsuccessfully. My two last letters had in my apprehension peculiarly strong claims on your justice, as they called upon you to consider what reparation was due to me, and in your power to make, for a serious and extensive injury which I had received, and to which you had materially contributed. Yet neither of these letters was even suffered to be read!

The request my first letter contained, you rejected without deigning to assign any reason for your refusal. It is again referred to your notice, as having the more immediate custody of the records of the Yearly Meeting.

While I was a member of the Society, I always considered the records as public property, and as such occasionally inspected and made extracts from them, without its having been ever objected to, till some time after the appointment of your present Clerk. But now it seems no persons in the Society are to be allowed these privileges except they are members of your meeting, or have first obtained your permission.

If such restrictions as these are deemed necessary, I am the less surprised at the difficulties thrown in the way of my obtaining as an appellant those rights which you deny to your own members.

The regulations of the last Yearly Meeting concerning appeals, are understood in several important particulars to be a great improvement upon the former practice. They are said to give an appellant a better chance of having unprejudiced judges, by allowing him to a reasonable extent, the right of challenge—and the aid of advisers in proportion to the number of respondents. These are salutary alterations in the rules, which evince a disposition to administer justice with impartiality. I trust you will agree with



me, that they cannot be too soon acted upon.\* Under the former rules an appellant, although a female, was once denied the consolation of a single friend to attend her! The painful retrospect of the past compared with the spirit which these new regulations evince, affords a cheering prospect of increasing liberality, which I cannot view without feeling a sensible satisfaction.

Waiting your answer, I remain your well-wishing friend,

THOMAS FOSTER.

*Bromley, May 4th, 1814.*

The requests in this letter\* so recommended to its attention, the meeting condescended to permit to be read, and were thereby incidentally informed of my feelings, on their refusal to consider the subject of my two former letters.

One of these requests they did grant, although they had hitherto suspended the publication of the rules to which it related, thereby usurping a power over the legislative authority of the Yearly Meeting, which they could not be entitled to exercise.

The other request they refused without assigning any reason for depriving an appellant of the right of access to the statute book of the Society. Had this request been submitted to them at their last meeting, as it ought to have been officially by the Clerk of the Quarterly Meeting, while the conclusion of that meeting was fresh in their recollection, I cannot suppose they would have come to such a decision. Soon after their Clerk furnished me with a copy of the following rules, intimating at the same time, that he had nothing else in commission from the meeting as to any other requests in my letter.

\* In this particular I had been misinformed, as no such *aid* appears to be allowed appellants by the new rules. A proposal to that effect was I suppose made and discussed, but not agreed to by the Yearly Meeting.

## Yearly Meeting, 1813.

After much solid and deliberate consideration, it is agreed that the following be the rules for conducting appeals in the Yearly Meeting.

1. That a Committee be annually appointed to hear and judge of such appeals. The Committee to consist of one representative from each meeting in Great Britain, which is represented in the Yearly Meeting. But in case the number of such meetings shall, at any time, be fewer than 28, the Meeting of Representatives shall nominate an additional one out of each Quarterly Meeting, in alphabetical order, which has not fewer than four representatives present, until the deficiency be supplied; beginning at any future time with the next meeting in rotation.\*

2. That all the representatives from such meetings, do meet at the close of the first sitting, for the purpose of nominating the said Committee.

3. That every appeal be delivered to the clerk for the time being, before the close of the second sitting, in writing, sealed up; with an indorsement specifying the appellant and the meeting appealed against.

4. That on its appearing that due notice has been given, all the representatives be directed again to meet previously to the next sitting; the appellants and respondents being duly apprized of such meeting, and having the liberty to be present. That at this meeting, the nomination agreed to by the 2nd of these rules, be read over to each set of appellants and respondents, as they are respectively called in; and each side be allowed, if they see occasion, to object to any of the proposed Committee, not exceeding six respectively, assigning no cause for the same; and then, that both the appellants and respondents do

\* The number of these meetings was formerly 40, or more. There are now only 28, and this article provides for a farther reduction, which is likely soon to take place.

withdraw. That if any of the Committee be so objected to, they be set aside, but as to that particular appeal only. That their places be supplied by the meeting of representatives, in like manner as the original nomination was made. That the Committee or Committees, as finally nominated, be reported to the third sitting of the Yearly Meeting; the names of the representatives from any meetings concerned in an appeal, being previously struck off from the list, as to that particular appeal.

5. That at a third sitting, all appeals be delivered to the Committee or Committees, in order to be immediately proceeded on; not less than 21 of the number appointed for a particular appeal, being at any time present thereon.

6. That the report of the Committee be read in the Yearly Meeting, in the presence of both parties, if they incline to be present; and that it be a final decision, except in matters of faith and principle; in which cases the party against whom a decision is given, may require to be heard by the meeting itself. If however in any case of appeal the report be not signed by at least 21 of the number for that appeal, either party may require to be heard in the Yearly Meeting.

7. That if any case be opened in the Yearly Meeting, the Committee of Appeals shall appoint two of their number to explain to the meeting, in the presence of the appellant and respondents the grounds of their decision, and of the dissent of any of the Committee who may withhold their signature.

In consequence of the foregoing regulations, the following rules in the Book of Extracts, under the head Appeals are made void, viz. Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10.

*Copy.*

WILLIAM MANLEY.

A few days before the Yearly Meeting I received a letter, of which the following is a copy.

*Tottenham, 13th of 5th Month, 1814.*

RESPECTED FRIEND,

I WRITE this on behalf of the respondents in the case of thy appeal.

From the tenor of thy second or repeated notice to the Quarterly Meeting, [p. 15,] we conclude it is thy intention, should a Committee of Appeals confirm that meeting's decision, to require to be heard by the Yearly Meeting. On the other hand, should the Committee reverse the judgment already given, we think we should not fully discharge our trust, without claiming the exercise of the same right.

On these considerations, and from a desire that the time of the Yearly Meeting may not be needlessly protracted, we propose to submit to it a question, whether, under such intentions on both sides, the hearing by a Committee may not be at once dispensed with, and give place to that by the meeting itself.

If the question be thus submitted, it will be needful for thee to be at hand at the time of the presentation of the appeal to the meeting, in order to be admitted together with us, and unite in the proposal. Shouldest thou favour us with thy reply, it may be communicated by letter to thy sincere and well-wishing friend,

LUKE HOWARD.

To Thomas Foster, Bromley.

My reply was as follows :—

*Bromley, May 14th, 1814.*

RESPECTED FRIEND,

I HAVE just received thy friendly letter, containing a proposal on behalf of the respondents on my appeal to the ensuing Yearly Meeting. As the oc-



casion for it appears to be grounded on the tenor of my renewed notice to the Quarterly Meeting, I have re-perused my copy of it, and cannot discover from what part of it you infer that it is my intention "to require to be heard by the Yearly Meeting," in case the decision of the Committee of Appeals should be against me, unless it may be from the use of the term "*full*" in that notice.

I did not use the term in that sense, nor mean to be so understood. It referred merely to the strong pledge I had given in my former notice of my desire "to occupy but very little of the time of the meeting or of its Committee;" because I foresaw that the circumstances which had induced me to resume the intention of appealing were likely on my part to take up more time, than I had previously resolved to devote to the whole of the case, if I went forward with my appeal.

After the intimation in my first notice, I felt it due to you, that I should explicitly state that I no longer held myself bound by it, but stood on the common ground of an appellant. I meant merely to imply this. I should not deem it decorous for any individual to predetermine not to be satisfied with the judgment of a Committee of Appeals; and with me a principal objection to your proposal is, that I do not see how I could be a party to it, without implying such a determination in the face of the Yearly Meeting at the opening of the business.

The case is widely different with you exercising a delegated trust on behalf of a large and respectable body. I am nevertheless as deeply impressed as I ever was how very undesirable any protracted personal discussion of the points at issue may be; and perhaps I cannot well give you a more decisive proof of this, than by saying that within the course of the last week, I have not only thought much, but consulted some of my friends respecting addressing a letter to you, in order if possible some arrangements might be agreed



on between us, that may save the time of the Yearly Meeting. And although I was advised to wave making any such proposal to you by letter, I had resolved on doing it when we met.

One other objection to your proposal strikes me, which perhaps I had better mention; and that is, whether it would not be to imply a disapproval of the important regulations made last Yearly Meeting, and thereby deprive its members at large of the advantages they seem calculated to confer, by making known, not only the decision of a Committee of Appeals, but the grounds of it. I observe this is required when the case is heard in the meeting, and where it is not in some instances it may be equally important.

I have no seal with so appropriate a motto, as thine "Nuncius Pacis," ornamented with the gospel emblem a dove, but I hail with pleasure the disposition thy letter evinces, and I trust in whatever way the points at issue may be heard, both parties will be animated by a wish to avoid all acrimony, or the introduction of extraneous matter, but above all by a love of truth in the first place—and of peace in the second. I am, very sincerely thy well-wishing friend,

THOMAS FOSTER.

To Luke Howard, Tottenham.

THE Yearly Meeting met on the 18th of May at ten. I was then informed by the Respondents, that having considered my letter they declined making any proposal to the Meeting, but intimated that it might be as well for me to be in waiting, for some time after my Appeal was presented, as the Meeting might have occasion to call for my attendance. I replied, it is my intention to be within call.

The meeting adjourned to four in the afternoon, when my appeal was laid on the table, sealed up and indorsed as the rules direct. I was soon informed by a message, that the *Representatives* would meet at the

close of the meeting, which took place a little after seven.

They met in the old meeting-house immediately. When the Respondents and myself were introduced, I was surprised to see so large an assembly. I estimated its number to be about 300; whereas, if it had been constituted of representatives only, as the rules direct, and every meeting had its full number present, those for London and Middlesex excepted, the whole number would only have been 112.\*

The major part of the assembly was therefore probably composed of the *privileged orders*, Ministers, Elders, and the members of the Meeting for Sufferings, for I can hardly imagine any other members of the Society would intrude themselves on such an appointment.

After a short time of silence, the names of the Committee of Appeals chosen by a meeting *thus constituted*, were read. It consisted of the following names :—

Edward Bellis, Cheshire and Staffordshire.

Hadwen Bragg, Cumberland and Northumberland.

William Wilson, Durham.

Henry Ecroyd, Lancashire.

Isaac Bragg, Westmoreland.

John Hoyland, Yorkshire.

Anthony Wigham, Scotland.

Joseph May, Berkshire and Oxfordshire.

Robert Horsenail, Kent.

William Chandler, Surrey and Sussex.

Thomas Seekings, Cambridge and Huntingdon.

Thomas Catchpool, Essex.

Jonathan Hutchinson, Lincolnshire.

Joseph John Gurney, Norfolk and Norwich.

\* Viz. 4 for Scotland, 28 for the six Northern Quarterly Meetings, 16 for four of the Southern, 20 for the five Eastern, 24 for the six Western, and 20 for the five Midland.

Samuel Alexander, jun. Suffolk.  
 George Fisher, Bristol and Somerset.  
 Joel Lean, Cornwall.  
 Joseph Treffry, Devonshire.  
 William Byrd, Dorset and Hants.  
 James Petley, Gloucester and Wilts.  
 Thomas Beavington, Hereford and Worcester.  
 Richard Summers Harford, Wales.  
 John Ransome, Bedford and Herts.  
 John Grant, Buckinghamshire.  
 Joshua Ransom Scales, Derbyshire and Nottingham.  
 Samuel Cook, Northamptonshire.  
 James Baker, Warwick, Leicester and Rutland.

The parties were now informed by the Clerk, that each might object to six of the names which had been read. My answer appearing to be first expected, I observed that the Friends nominated were so much strangers to me, that I should make no objection to any of them.

John Eliot observed, that the six Respondents who were all present, should withdraw with a list of the names to consider the nomination, and to depute one of their number to report thereon to the meeting. I expressed my concurrence in this proposal as being reasonable, although I had waved the exercise of the same right. The Respondents, however, without retiring acquiesced in the nomination which had been made, a list of which being given to the parties, they soon after withdrew.

Committee of Appeals, 1st Sitting at Gracechurch Street, 5th Month 19th, 1814, at Four in the afternoon.

THE Respondents and myself having received notice attended accordingly, but were not called in till near six. On being admitted, it appeared that the Appeal had been opened and read. The Clerk of the

Committee suggested whether it would be necessary to read it *again*.

One of the respondents observed, it would certainly be proper to have it read in the presence of the parties, as the respondents were unacquainted with its contents. They might have added, that according to good order, and even the spirit of the rule, the seal of an appeal should never be broken previous to the hearing of the parties. For what purpose the usual practice was departed from in this instance, whilst the parties were known to be in waiting, the Committee did not explain. The promptitude with which they decided on the first objection urged by the respondents, may however throw some light on so singular a commencement of the exercise of judicial powers.

The Appeal was read again by Joseph John Gurney, who had been chosen Clerk of the Committee, or rather Chairman under that name. It is as follows:—

To the Yearly Meeting of Friends, to be held in  
London the 18th of the 5th Month, 1814.

THE Appeal of Thomas Foster, against the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex sheweth,

1. That neither his being a subscriber to the London Unitarian Book Society, instituted for the promotion of Christian knowledge and the practice of virtue, “by inciting the attention of men *to the genuine doctrines of revelation*,” as delivered in the Scriptures; nor his having promoted an examination of the Scriptural soundness of certain passages in a Yearly-Meeting Epistle, can he submits to you be justly deemed offences against the rules, or inconsistent with the principles of the Society.

2. That your Appellant for having thus unequivocally asserted the superior authority of Scripture in



all that relates to faith and worship ; and for having subjected one of your Epistles to that test, the only criterion by which the truth of all the doctrines held by professed Christians ought to be tried, was accused by two Overseers of the Monthly Meeting, of which he was a member, of having “ imbibed and aided in propagating some opinions contrary to the principles of the Society.” In so accusing him, they admitted they did not act so much on their own judgment, as at the instance of many friends of other meetings, whose names they chose to conceal.

3. That the said Overseers though thus accusing your Appellant, could not with any consistency have intended to censure the fundamental principles of the London Unitarian Book Society, which they professed to consider unobjectionable. They are

“ That there is but ONE GOD, the sole *Former, Supporter* and *Governor* of the Universe, the only proper object of religious worship ; and that there is one Mediator between GOD and men, *the Man Christ Jesus*, who was commissioned to instruct men in their duty, and to reveal the doctrine of a future life.”

Your Appellant submits to you that a careful examination of the following texts, Mark xii. 28—34, Acts xvii. 22—31, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6, 1 Tim. ii. 1—5, 2 Tim. i. 1, 2, 7—10 ; not to mention many others, will prove those principles to be strictly scriptural, and sufficiently vindicate him for becoming a subscriber to this Book Society.

4. That the Monthly Meeting, without any adequate inquiry or evidence, recorded the aforesaid accusation, and appointed a Committee to visit your Appellant “ thereon and report.”

5. That the Committee so appointed, apparently sensible of the insufficiency of the original charges to justify disownment, paid very little attention to them, (though the sole ostensible objects of their appointment,) but exerted themselves to discover



fresh matters of accusation against your Appellant, by means of ensnaring interrogatories, on what they called "some important points of doctrine."

6: That their report to the Monthly Meeting manifests the inquisitorial character of the visits of this Committee, and their disposition to seek for additional accusations against your Appellant. This document speaks of "the eternal divinity—and omnipotence of Christ," and of "the propriety of applying to him in secret supplication."

The Committee who drew it up, nevertheless assured your Appellant at the first visit they paid him, that they never understood that the Society of Friends ascribed divinity to the man Christ Jesus, but to that divine power which dwelt in and acted by him. Hence your Appellant concluded they did not ascribe omnipotence to the Mediator of the new Covenant, nor consider him as the proper object of prayer. From this time, however, they refused to explain their accusations on these three "important points of doctrine," thereby leaving it wholly uncertain whether, on these subjects, there is any or what difference between their sentiments and those of your Appellant. His opinions on those points are grounded on the clear, decisive, and unequivocal letter and sense of Scripture. If you should judge he has mistaken their import, he trusts you will, if not for his sake, for that of the Church, explicitly say wherein you may think his mistake consists; and not like this Committee, shroud your own principles in obscurity, while you are condemning those of your Appellant.

7. That the Monthly Meeting acted with great precipitation in receiving and adopting the said report, and was not warranted by the letter or spirit of the rules of the discipline, or of gospel order, in directing on the credit of such a document, a "testimony of denial" to be prepared against your Appellant.

8. That the testimony of denial so prepared was adopted at the next Meeting, with equal precipitation, although it is still more objectionable and unjust than the Committee's report, with some parts of which it is absolutely inconsistent. It contains also additional and unfounded accusations; and your Appellant submits to you, that the Monthly Meeting was not justified by any rule of the Society, nor by any principles or precepts of the gospel in issuing the said testimony of denial.

9. That your Appellant, in due time, gave notice of appeal to the Quarterly Meeting; but before the same was presented, the Clerk, and afterwards the Meeting for Sufferings, refused him access to the records of the Society, some parts of which he had important occasion to consult in preparing for his defence. He has lately, as an appellant to you, repeated the same request by letter, with no better success, but he trusts you will manifest a more proper sense of impartiality and justice.\*

10. That the Committee of the Quarterly Meeting, to whom the case of your Appellant was referred, decided a question on mere ex parte evidence, which was intended to deprive him of all the rights of an appellant, though they well knew that he had not forfeited those rights by the breach of any rule of the Society concerning appeals.

The hearing of the case was thus deferred about three weeks, when the Committee reported thereon in a manner which still farther evinced their want of impartiality, but it appearing that there was no foundation whatever for their objection, the Quarterly Meeting desired "the Committee to proceed with the business committed to it, and report. The most pertinent rule which could be adduced was read, and found to be nothing to the purpose, as it only pre-

\* Very little objection was made by the Respondents to the general statement of facts in the preceding sections, and none which I deem worth notice.

cludes the reception and hearing of "any appeal in print, or that hath been printed.\*

11. That although your Appellant was afterwards heard by this Committee with much patient attention, he submits to you that on several occasions they plainly indicated either very incorrect or partial views of some of the most essential principles of all regular judicial proceedings.

At one time they† proposed judging between the parties, not solely as justice required, on the original, or even on the recorded charges against your Appellant, but on the supposed errors he fell into in the course of his defence. At other times, after having perhaps justly informed him, that they judged he had laid before them some irrelevant matter, and admonished him not to deviate in a similar manner, they permitted the Respondents, without any admonition or restraint, to adduce against your Appellant whatever they chose, however irrelevant and unconnected with the original or any of the recorded charges against him. And on his objecting to the

\* The Respondents desired the Committee of Appeals to compare the first-mentioned imputation of partiality in this section, with the first report of the Quarterly Meeting's Committee to that Meeting. The instance alluded to, is, I believe, correctly stated in my Narrative, pp. 136—139. And even this report implies that the Committee "considered" the "ex parte evidence" of the Respondents, without previously hearing the Appellant. It should also have stated, that they not only "considered" but made known their decision thereon to the parties, before "the Appellant had any opportunity given him" to shew the futility of the Respondents' plea. This decision was evidently intended to deprive him of his rights as an appellant; and the opportunity given him afterwards was plainly designed to accomplish the same object, by ensnaring interrogatories, which, taught by experience, he prudently refused answering.

† The imputation of partiality in the first part of this section, was said by Luke Howard, its Clerk, or more properly Chairman, not to apply to the Committee but to himself. The facts are, I believe, correctly stated in my Narrative, pp. 171, 172, and 179—181, consistently with which, instead of expressing myself as above, I admit I should have said, instead of "they," several of them proposed, &c.



very wide latitude they took under this licence, apparently forgetting their former decision, the Committee, by their Clerk, represented themselves "bound to hear whatever the Respondents chose to lay before them, and considered to be connected with the object of their appointment."

12. That your Appellant cannot say how far the Committee was influenced in its judgment, by the supplementary accusations which the Respondents were thus so improperly allowed, or rather encouraged to adduce against him. The final report of the Committee to the Quarterly Meeting only states, that they were "unitedly of the judgment that *the decision of the Monthly Meeting in relation to the Appellant should be confirmed.*"

Perhaps it was intended by these expressions, obscurely to intimate that the Committee did not approve *the proceedings* of the Monthly Meeting in relation to the appellant, nor *its decision* in favour of unscriptural articles of faith, *in relation to the Society*. The proceedings and the decision your Appellant submits to you, equally relate to both, and unless the proceedings can be generally justified as forming a precedent worthy of being approved and acted upon, in the regular administration of the discipline, *the decision* ought unquestionably to be reversed.

The Committee could scarcely have made so marked a distinction between the proceedings and the decision, and have limited their approval of the latter so singularly to its relation to the appellant, without some special design. The judgment was unanimous, and could not therefore have been intended to express or imply an approval of such proceedings as some of the most intelligent of its members had censured as unjust, and which none of them, in the hearing of your Appellant, attempted to defend.\*

\* The Respondents alleged, that it is not usual in the report of a Committee to state the grounds of its decision. This is surely rather to evade than to reply to the objections in **this section**.



13. That your Appellant expressing dissatisfaction with the aforesaid report, the case was, according to the rules, opened in the Quarterly Meeting; on his part principally by the appeal being read, and by his reading a written address. The Respondents were then heard in reply, and were allowed, without any interruption on the part of the Meeting, to adduce whatever accusations they chose against your Appellant, entirely unconnected as most of them were with the original charges against him.

When the Respondents had concluded their reply, the Meeting having sat long, your Appellant, from that consideration only, relinquished his intention of shewing, article by article, that the Respondents had not even attempted to controvert any material part of the allegations in his appeal. He contented himself with exposing some of the most palpable or injurious of their misrepresentations, but declined entering upon others which would have taken more time, assuring the Meeting he should rely on its not suffering itself to be biassed in its judgment by those unfounded and supplementary charges.

The parties having waved the right of being farther heard, were requested to withdraw; soon after which the Meeting adjourned to four the next afternoon.\*

14. That every account your Appellant has received of the subsequent discussion in the absence of the parties, combines to impress him with a strong persuasion that the Quarterly Meeting did not in reality come to any proper or definite judgment upon either of the original, or even upon any of the recorded charges against him.

For it appears, on the concurring evidence of many credible witnesses, surprising as the fact is, that not one person who spoke in favour of confirming the

\* The Respondents did not attempt to deny the truth of any part of this section.

judgment of the Monthly Meeting, uttered one syllable upon any of those charges; and that such of them as assigned any reasons for their judgment, grounded them entirely on the supplementary accusations, and principally on those to which your Appellant had declined replying, because he depended upon the Meeting not suffering itself to be warped in its judgment by them, much less by any repetition of the same, or the production of any other irrelevant charges.

The particulars of the Appeal were, it seems, not entered into, because it would have been "to enter into a wide field of investigation." How was this designed to be remedied? By a proposal for the Meeting to consider, "whether the appellant was, or was not, one in principle with Friends."

In what manner this question was intended to be examined, was not explained. But after several Friends had objected, in very strong terms, to the proceedings against your Appellant, as irregular, disorderly and indefensible, whose objections appear to have remained unanswered, it was erroneously stated to be "a very clear case that the appellant *is a member of another Society*;" and to be plain, "from an extract out of a work of his, read yesterday evening, that he rejected the well-known fundamental doctrine of the Society."

These were the apparent grounds of the Meeting's judgment, for no others, as your Appellant is credibly informed, were assigned, excepting the report of the Committee feeling pleasant to the mind of one friend, and another being much hurt by many things which had been said on matters with which he was not conversant, "but most of all by the extract above alluded to, which," he said, "opposed the doctrine of divine influence."

Yet from this extract, in connexion with the preceding or the following sentence, no such inference can be drawn, with any appearance of justice,

or even of plausibility. The passage altogether, rather supports than opposes the doctrine of divine influence. It was not written by your Appellant, and expressly quoted not to exhibit his own sentiments, but to shew “ that the real difference of opinion between those who are supposed to take opposite sides of the question, *may not be so great as is generally imagined.*”

This attempt to promote a spirit of charity among Christians of different persuasions, was so misrepresented by the Respondents, that your Appellant has good reason to suppose that it made a greater impression on the Meeting to his prejudice than any thing else which was alleged against him. This passage, it may be said, notices a distinction between that diffusive gift which “ the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, hath given to every man to profit withal,” from that extraordinary effusion of the holy spirit by which Jesus Christ and his Apostles were enabled to do many wonderful works. It does so. And so important is this distinction, that without making it, your Appellant does not perceive how any person can be properly said to be a believer in Christianity as a *special* revelation from God \*

15. That the minute of judgment made by the Quarterly Meeting, affords a strong presumption on the face of it ; that it was not founded on any deliberate consideration of the charges and the proceedings against your Appellant. Like the report of its Committee, and in an equally pointed manner, it

\* The Respondents observed that it was quite sufficient for the Friends, in the Quarterly Meeting, to express their concurrence with the report of the Committee, without assigning their reasons. Before the Committee of Appeals I granted this, provided a few Friends only had clearly assigned sufficient grounds to justify the decision, but that none should, as I am credibly informed was the fact, does appear very extraordinary, and fully justifies the above inferences. The Respondents candidly admitted, that the extract in this section, respecting divine influence, was introduced as here stated.



only expresses an approval of the decision of the Monthly Meeting *in disowning him*, without extending its approbation to its proceedings, or those of its Overseers and Committee. Your Appellant therefore submits to you, that so remarkable a coincidence of expression appears plainly to indicate a conviction on the part of the Meeting, that the proceedings on which that decision is founded, cannot be justified as regular and orderly.

The minute says, the meeting deliberately considered the case of your Appellant. Very well: this was one part of its duty. But what else did the meeting consider? The case the Respondents made out? Not a word like it in the minute of judgment. With what then did the meeting compare the case they considered so deliberately? With the reply of the Respondents? No such thing, so far as appears by this minute. The meeting seems to have weighed the case of your Appellant, not against any evidence or arguments they heard from the Respondents, but against the mere authority of its Committee's report, which throws no light whatever upon the subject; and to which your Appellant was constitutionally intitled to demur, to claim a hearing of the parties by the meeting, and a judgment wholly founded thereon, which by the positive testimony of this minute was pronounced on other and very different grounds.\*

16. That deeply impressed as your Appellant was with the injustice of this decision, he was much more disposed to rely on other means of counteracting its operation as a pernicious precedent, than to seek the same object by an appeal to you. But since he has been intitled to those privileges which due no-

\* The Respondents passing over in silence the inferences deduced in this section, pleaded the authority of the Committee's report as being more weighty than the reasoning of those who objected to the proceedings. And the very comfortable feelings of the Committee during the last half hour of their deliberations, were gravely urged as no slight evidence of the rectitude of their decision.



tice of appeal implies, and which a decent regard to your authority ought to have preserved inviolate, both have been invaded in an unprecedented and unjustifiable manner. A pamphlet containing various unfounded and injurious charges and reflexions on the character of your Appellant, was published at or before the last Yearly Meeting. For nearly six months he considered it as the unauthorized effusion of an individual, and as such undeserving any notice from him, however widely it might be circulated.

At length however he found, by a printed minute of the Meeting for Sufferings dated 9th month 3d last, that this work intituled "Remarks suggested by the perusal of a Portraiture of Primitive Quakerism, &c." was "published with the approbation of the Morning Meeting" of Ministers and Elders. Two copies of it are recommended to be taken by each Monthly, and one by each Quarterly Meeting—"for the general information of Friends," manifestly calculated as it is, to excite unjust prejudices against your Appellant. From whatever quarter those who are to be his judges may come, they cannot be supposed to have escaped its influence.

Such are the measures which have been resorted to, and so openly has the collective influence of "many friends of other meetings" been at length exerted against your Appellant, by giving their sanction and extensive publicity to this work, and he submits to you, by a misapplication of a rule of 1695, which relates only to such works as are published at the expense of the Society. If your constituted authorities act thus, towards those who are seeking redress at your hands, how can they expect an unprejudiced hearing and impartial justice? Or how can your judicial authority be permanently respected, if such conduct as this be connived at or encouraged?

Your Appellant presented a remonstrance to the Meeting for Sufferings on this occasion, which was disregarded. It was referred to two of its members,

who on seeing from whom it came, *without reading it*, reported, "that it was not proper to be laid before the meeting, and did not concern them!" Had this temperate remonstrance, which clearly stated the specific grounds of his complaint, met with any reasonable attention, it is highly probable it would have prevented this appeal to you. (See pp. 3—15.)

But to wave claiming a hearing, to which he is constitutionally entitled under charges thus assiduously accumulated against him by the hand of authority, might be thought to imply that he admitted them to be well-founded. Your Appellant cannot grant this; and conscious as he is of the difficulty of removing prejudices and wiping away accusations however groundless, which have been so openly, widely, and perseveringly disseminated, he claims the right of shewing them to be unfounded and injurious, before he enters upon the subjects more properly at issue between the Respondents and himself.

After hearing both parties fairly and fully, I presume it will become your province to decide the points at issue between them, which in effect are, whether the paramount authority of the Scriptures on all matters of faith and worship is to be acknowledged and respected, and the rights of conscience among your members to be preserved inviolate. Or, whether the Overseers, Elders, or Committees of your meetings for discipline, may at their own discretion question their brethren on points of faith, and impose on them for doctrines the commandments of men, to the obvious disparagement of the Scriptures, as if they do not contain a plain, intelligible and sufficient revelation of all necessary articles of Christian faith, and clearly point out the true object of supreme religious worship.

"The true worshippers," said our Lord and Master, "shall worship the Father." The first criterion in his estimation of all true worship. The second is equally essential, that it be "in spirit and in truth."

That you and I may "know what we worship," and not be ashamed of holding up before men the testimony of Jesus, concerning the alone true object of worship, is the sincere desire of your well-wishing friend, in the gospel of love and peace,

THOMAS FOSTER.

*Bromley, May 16th, 1814.*

The Appeal having been read, the Respondents objected to my being heard relative to the sanction given to the pamphlet alluded to in the latter part of it, or to any thing the Morning Meeting or the Meeting for Sufferings had done. We are appointed, said they, to defend the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting in this case, and have nothing to do *as Respondents* with that pamphlet, or with the manner in which it had been sanctioned and circulated.

I replied, that although the countenance which had been given to this work, was not the act of the Quarterly Meeting, *as such*, it was so far as I complained of it, the act of those who were its members, associated in a collective capacity *with others*, and diffusing by their united authority and influence unfounded and injurious prejudices against me. It was therefore highly reasonable that I should be allowed a little time to endeavour to remove those prejudices which had been thus excited. The objection of the Respondents seemed to imply, that I meant to call upon the Committee to give judgment on the case, which I did not, but merely to claim a hearing that I might if possible remove such erroneous impressions concerning my sentiments and conduct, as the work in question so sanctioned might have left on their minds.

Such a claim as this was never refused in courts of justice to any accused person, and when there was cause to apprehend that popular prejudice might endanger the impartial administration of justice, it was the practice to remove or delay the trial of the party. I trusted therefore that the Committee would not hesitate to allow me this privilege.



The Committee desired the parties to withdraw, that they might consider the Appellant's claim and the Respondents' objection.

On our being called in, a minute was read by the Clerk confirming the objection of the Respondents.

I requested a copy, which the Committee refused. I then urged them to reconsider a decision which appeared to me unjust in itself, and especially when I contrasted it with the unlimited license which had been, as several of the Respondents knew, granted to the deputies of the Monthly Meeting, to adduce fresh charges against me however irrelevant, throughout the whole of the proceedings.

The Clerk informed me, that on inquiry it appeared that only six or seven of the members of the Committee had read the pamphlet of which I complained in my appeal, from whence he concluded it had not been so widely circulated as I apprehended. I replied, it is not in my power to say how far the minute of the Meeting for Sufferings, and the recommendation it contained had been complied with, but I happened to know that the pamphlet in question had found its way into various and distant parts of the kingdom, and had actually produced such effects on the minds of some friends as I had spoken of in my appeal.

The Committee intimating their adherence to the minute, I hesitated whether to claim any farther hearing or not; but at length concluded to proceed, not as I hinted, with any expectation of obtaining justice at the hands of men, who could refuse an accused person so equitable a demand, but because I would not afford any pretext for denying me the right of a hearing by the Yearly Meeting, provided I should think proper to claim that privilege.

At this sitting, I read my written defence to the conclusion of the observations on the conduct of the Monthly Meeting's deputies in the Quarterly Meeting. Some time before eight, the Committee adjourned to nine the next morning.



Committee of Appeals, Devonshire House, 2d Sitting  
5th Month 20th, 1814.

THE Committee met at the time appointed. When I was called upon to proceed, I expressed my regret that the decision of the Committee yesterday, would occasion me to occupy much more of their time than I should otherwise have thought necessary. They had refused to hear my just complaints of the manner in which I had been treated by the constituted authorities of the Society, while I was an appellant to the Yearly Meeting. I therefore felt myself called upon to shew more minutely that a similar unconstitutional influence had been exerted against me, by the agency of the Overseers and Committee of the Monthly Meeting, who were in reality the mere tools of a secret junta, whose names they refused to disclose, but by whose instigation it is evident they acted. My proofs of this and of the futility of their accusations were principally deduced from my *MS.* minutes, the substance of which is given in my Narrative, pp. 1 to 25, 56 to 105, and 149 to 178.

I afterwards read the remainder of my written defence. The Committee adjourned about two o'clock to four the same afternoon.

Committee of Appeals, Gracechurch Street, 3d Sitting  
5th Month 20th, 1814.

AT this sitting the Respondents went through their reply, which occupied about three hours and a half, during which time I made minutes. From these I might exhibit the substance of their argument, but as it was in my apprehension neither consistent nor scriptural, I shall omit any statement of it here, in the hope they will lay it before the public more fully and correctly than is in my power. The restraint under which they stated the members of the

Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex felt themselves, not to publish any reply to the pamphlet entitled a Portraiture of Primitive Quakerism, &c. or to the Narrative of the proceedings in my case, while the same was pending, has now been long removed. This was complained of by them as a grievance of no small magnitude. Either this complaint was unfounded and ought not to have been preferred in such general terms *only*, or the parties making it ought to have long since evinced their sense of the injury of which they complained, by availing themselves of the removal of those pretexts on which it rested. This they have not yet done; I was surprised at such an empty parade of delicacy, when I recollected that I had been in effect held up by the Morning Meeting of Ministers and Elders, and by the Meeting for Sufferings, to the whole Society as "a professed disciple of Mahomet," and was yet as they knew, and even at their instance deprived of any opportunity before my judges of repelling such an accusation.

When the Respondents had concluded their reply, my father-in-law, Thomas Compton, who had at my request accompanied me, expressed a wish that the Committee would consider the propriety of adjourning, as they had already sat so many hours, and he thought must be aware the Appellant was too much exhausted to render it proper to call upon him to proceed farther that evening. The Respondents without waiting to hear the sentiments of the Committee on this proposal, objected to it, saying, if it was granted, they should claim a similar privilege, which would occasion another adjournment! The Committee were of opinion, that the present was the proper time, if I inclined to make any observations on the reply of the Respondents. My rejoinder took about an hour, when I concluded, the Clerk of the Committee drew up a paper, which he proposed the Appellant and the Respondents should sign,

acknowledging that they had been fairly and fully heard.

I objected to signing any such paper unless it stated as an exception the point whereon I had claimed a right of being heard, which they refused. The Committee declined stating this circumstance, and therefore no paper was signed. The Respondents and myself were desired to attend at the same place to-morrow evening, at half after six, to give the Committee any explanation they might call for. Before the time appointed we received notice that our attendance was not required. We were afterwards desired to attend the Committee on the 23d at nine in the morning, when, after waiting some time, we were informed the Committee had no occasion for our attendance.

Soon after the Yearly Meeting met, we received notice that the Committee of Appeals intended to present their report to the sitting in the afternoon.

### Yearly Meeting, 5th Month 23d, 1814.

ABOUT half past four the Respondents, my father-in-law, and myself were introduced to seats near the table. The Clerk inquired whether the parties had been fairly and fully heard by the Committee? I replied, I have, with one exception relative to a subject noticed in my appeal, on which the Committee at the suggestion of the Respondents refused to hear me, on such grounds as could not possibly apply to my claim to be heard on that point by the meeting, if in my estimation it should be necessary. One of the Committee proposed informing the meeting why they refused hearing me upon that point. I requested they would either state my claim and their objection, or let the former be done by reading the last article in my appeal. It was read accordingly by the Clerk, the conclusion excepted. The Respondents objected



to my being heard at all on that subject, saying it was irrelevant matter not relating to the decision of the Quarterly Meeting which they were appointed to defend, and against which the appeal was presented.

I urged the reasonableness of allowing any accused person to endeavour to remove whatever prejudices might be supposed to have influenced the minds of those who were to be his judges. No accused person was ever denied this privilege in our courts of justice, and in some cases trials were removed or put off in order to insure an impartial, unbiassed jury. I only required a short time to say all that I should deem necessary on this subject, perhaps less than had been already taken up with the discussion, whether I was to be allowed this privilege or not.

One of the Committee alleged that the Appellant wished to be heard in reply to a pamphlet which had been published, with the approbation of the Morning Meeting, since the decision against which he appealed.

I replied, this statement confirms my previous persuasion, that the conclusion of the Committee rested on mistaken grounds. I never intended to enter into an examination of this pamphlet, but only of such parts of it as had a direct tendency to excite unfounded prejudices against me in the minds of my judges.

Joseph John Gurney said, that on inquiring of the twenty-seven members of the Committee individually, it appeared that only six or seven had read or seen the pamphlet; and he alleged that the Committee were not at all influenced by it, and considered it quite irrelevant matter.

A number of Friends objecting to my claim, in preferring which, I was *mistakenly* said to have non-suited myself. For I only claimed a hearing, and not the judgment of the court. However, I concluded to wave it, as no attempt was made to justify the work.



The following report was then read by the Clerk.

To the Yearly Meeting,

WE, your Committee appointed to hear and judge of the Appeal of Thomas Foster, against the Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex, having paid deliberate attention to the case as laid before us in the respective statements of the Appellant and Respondents, report, that we are unanimously of the judgment that the decision of the said Quarterly Meeting, on the appeal of the said Thomas Foster, against the Monthly Meeting of Ratcliff, should be confirmed.

“Signed at the Back Chamber, Gracechurch Street, 5th Month 23d, 1814, by all the Committee.”

After this report had been *twice read*, and a minute thereon made and read, I rose to request the case might “be heard in the Meeting,” agreeably to the 6th rule concerning Appeals.

Some objections were now made, particularly by William Tuke and William Alexander, to the case being entered into; the latter alleging that I had deprived myself of the right of being heard, by printing my Appeal.

John Wilkinson, the Clerk, observed, that it must be evident to the Meeting that the Appeal had not been printed. The rule alluded to was now called for and read, viz. “This Meeting agrees not to receive, in future, any Appeal in print, or that hath been printed.”

William Tuke said it was intended to prevent the printing of any thing relative to an appeal, while the same was pending. Several other Friends concurred in this opinion. It was however concluded, as the minute related, only to printing an appeal; and the parties had been heard by a Committee who had pre-

sented a report, that the appeal should be read as the preliminary step to the parties being heard by the Meeting.

My right to a hearing, under the existing rules, being thus admitted, some considerations were suggested, in order to induce me to relinquish it. These were in substance, that, as the Meeting had refused to hear me on that subject which induced me to appeal, whether it would not be more consistent with that profession, and more likely to promote my own peace of mind in a dying hour, quietly to submit to the judgment of so large and judicious a Committee, than to persevere in claiming a further hearing?

I informed the Meeting, that although I was not satisfied at present with the judgment of the Committee, it was possible I might be, when I knew "*the grounds of their decision*," as the 7th rule concerning appeals required. (See p. 29.) Should that be the case, I should be truly glad to feel no farther obligation to occupy the time of the Meeting.

The rule being read, the Committee reported that they had appointed Joseph John Gurney, and Joel Lean, "to explain to the Meeting, in the presence of the Appellant and Respondents, the grounds of their decision," and that they were prepared to present the same. It could not be denied, that the rule was absolutely imperative, but the leading Disciplinarians were too wary to permit the Committee to state to the Meeting the grounds of their decision, for then these grounds might have been examined. William Tuke observed, that the rule did not say at what stage of the proceedings this explanation should be given. The Meeting were to judge of that, and not the Appellant or the Respondents. I am of opinion, he added, it is not necessary at present to call upon the Committee to explain the grounds of their decision. This opinion being supported by a number of Friends, it was proposed that the Appeal

should be read. I took the liberty to say, that it appeared to me that common sense, and the evident import of the rule, pointed out that the most proper time for giving the explanation required in the presence of the parties, was before they had been heard by the Meeting, which would be afterwards as competent to judge of the grounds of any decision it might come to, as its Committee.

The Meeting concluded to hear the parties, without requiring any explanation of the grounds of the Committee's decision.\* The Appeal was then read by the Clerk,† very audibly and impressively. After which, the minutes of the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings on the case were also read. The farther hearing being deferred till the next sitting, my Father Compton and myself withdrew a little after seven, soon after which the Meeting adjourned.

Yearly Meeting, 5th Month 24th, 1814.

A FEW minutes before noon, the Respondents and myself had notice, and were introduced to seats near the table. My Father Compton accompanied me. After a short pause, I rose and addressed the Meeting, as follows :

MY CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

THERE are two considerations by which I am

\* Till some months after the Yearly Meeting, I did not know whether the persons deputed by the Committee to give this explanation to the Meeting, meant to do it verbally or in writing. I was then informed, it was prepared in writing, submitted to the Committee and approved by them, to be laid before the Yearly Meeting as their united judgment. But as that assembly did not choose it should be read in conformity to its own rule made in 1813, although several of the Committee applied to their Clerk for it, they were refused a copy of their own document. So important was it deemed to keep the grounds of this decision in the dark.

† For a copy of which, see pp. 35—47.



powerfully impressed in rising to address you. The first is the high importance of those principles of our common faith, for adhering to, and professing which, I have been called in question, and now stand before you, as a person accused by a large and powerful body. The other is the painful sense I feel of my incompetency to support and defend those principles in such a manner as the occasion requires.

Sensible as I am of this, and of the inadequacy of human reason, unassisted by the discoveries of divine revelation, to have unfolded to mankind in any satisfactory manner, those hopes of a never-ending inheritance in a future state of progressive improvement, which are brought to light by the gospel, I cannot for a moment doubt, but that every essential part of such a revelation is wisely fitted for its designed end; that is, adapted to the capacities of those to whom it is addressed, the bulk of mankind, the great family of the universal Parent.

Simplicity is accordingly found to be one of the most distinguishing characteristics of all divinely revealed truths, as they are recorded by the sacred writers, and especially those which their great Master taught. And therefore when any supposed Christian tenet appears to want this quality, it requires to be examined with the greater attention, from the presumption on the face of it, that it is not of divine origin. But if *mystery*, the peculiar characteristic of false doctrines—the commandments of men, is inscribed upon it, not in faint, but in strong characters, and avowed to be its chief recommendation, we are doubly called upon to beware of receiving, for a divine truth, the comments or inventions of fallible men.

Of the scriptural simplicity and soundness of those principles which I am now called upon to vindicate in my own defence, I am unshakenly and increasingly satisfied. But I am more and more doubtful how far I may be enabled to do tolerable justice to



so good, so glorious a cause. The contest is such a one, as I never encountered. Yet, with the New Testament in my hand, and relying upon its testimony, I am not dismayed either at the number, or the known talents of some of my opponents.

No less than six Respondents are selected out of the largest Quarterly Meeting in the kingdom, with whom I shall have to discuss the points at issue between us. And how many of the still unknown prompters of the accusation may be among those who will act as my judges, I have no means of ascertaining. Their names have been hitherto concealed from me, in open violation of as express and positive a rule of the Society as any the Book of Extracts contains.\*

If, therefore, I should fail in so arduous, so unpromising a contest, I shall have the consolation of reflecting that the weight of influence arrayed against me has been such, that my failure cannot of itself form any just presumption of weakness in the cause in which I am engaged, but only of incompetence in the advocate. If it should so happen, it may be for the best. It will not be the first time that truth has been outvoted. The doctrines of Jesus of Nazareth were equally true, and equally important, when "all the disciples forsook him and fled," as

\* Here I proposed for the Clerk to read this rule, that the Meeting might see I had rightly described it. Some objection was now made by Luke Howard, to the Clerk being called upon by the Appellant to assist him in stating his case. I replied, I have no objection to reading the rule myself, but I thought it most proper to be done by the Clerk. It was then read, and is as follows: "Whereas, it may happen that some Friends may suffer much in their reputation and character by a detracting spirit, *which too much prevails among some bearing our name*; who shelter themselves under a pretence, that they say no more than they have heard from others, *but will not discover who they are*; wherefore, to prevent this evil of reporting and tale bearing, it is agreed, that such reporters or tale-bearers *shall either discover their authors, or be dealt with and testified against as the authors thereof.*" 1744.

when a short time before the multitudes cried "Hosanna to the son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

I am chiefly desirous to bear my testimony to the truth faithfully and plainly, as it appears to me by the united voice of reason and Scripture. Respecting the result, I am not anxious, knowing it is in better hands than mine or your's. The task which has, by an unsought-for train of circumstances, devolved on me, is comparatively easy; and, with my convictions, it would have been mean indeed to have shrunk from the trial. I cannot forget that it was in the same cause that William Penn suffered imprisonment in the Tower of London, for publishing the *Sandy Foundation Shaken*, a work repeatedly sanctioned by the Society;\* nor that long before that time the intrepid Servetus was burnt at Geneva, at the instigation of the unrelenting Calvin. Many years after, when the true principles of the Reformation ought to have been better understood, the same punishment was inflicted in this city, on Bartholomew Legatt, who was, Fuller the historian tells us,

\* This Tract was first printed in 1668. About five years after, its Author published a reply to John Faldo, in which he says, T. F. that is, Thomas Firmin, would have the Apology for it, entitled, "Innocency with her open Face," to be "*a retraction*," which Penn positively denies. See his Works, vol. ii. p. 453. This edition of Penn's Works was published by the Society, about eight years after the Author's decease, viz. in 1726. In the Table of Contents, opposite the *full title* of the *Sandy Foundation Shaken*, the following advertisement is *conspicuously* printed in the margin:—"Note. *A learned Defence* of this Treatise is in the posthumous works of Richard Claidge, sold by the printer hereof." In the year 1771, the *Sandy Foundation* was again published by the Society, in Penn's SELECT WORKS, in 1 vol. folio; and again in 1782, in 5 vols. 8vo. Such is the manner in which this work has been *publicly* and *pointedly* distinguished by the Society. At length, however, a profession of the scriptural doctrines it contains, incurs censure and disownment! Has the Society changed its principles, or is it become less tolerant than formerly? Perhaps both.

“excellently skilled in Scripture, and his conversation unblameable.”\*

The warrant for his execution, under the hand of James I. was addressed to the Sheriffs of London, in 1611, as the instrument testifies, “with the advice and consent, as well of the Reverend Bishops and other Divines, as also of men learned in the law, in judgment sitting and assisting.”†

\* In the commission addressed by “James, King of England, &c. defender of the faith, &c. to our right trusty and right well-beloved Counsellor, Thomas Lord Ellesmere, our Chancellor of England,” the errors of the said Bartholomew Legatt, who was prosecuted at the suit of John King, then Bishop of London, are said to consist “chiefly in these thirteen blasphemous positions following, viz. That the creed called the *Nicene Creed* and *Athanasius's Creed*, contain not a profession of the true Christian faith, or that he will not profess his faith according to the same creeds. That Christ is not God of God begotten, not made, but begotten and made. That there are no persons in the Godhead. That Christ was not God from everlasting, but began to be God, when he took flesh of the *Virgin Mary*. That the world was not made by Christ. That the Apostles teach Christ to be man only. That there is no generation in God, but of creatures. That this assertion, God to be made man, is contrary to the rule of faith, and monstrous blasphemy. That Christ was not before the fulness of time except by promise. That Christ was not God otherwise then anointed God. That Christ was not in the form of God equal with God, that is, in substance of God, but in righteousness and giving salvation. That Christ by his Godhead wrought no miracle. That Christ is not to be prayed unto.”

† That the reader may more fully see the true character of that union of Church and State, which existed in this country at the time when the present authorized version of the Scriptures was translating, under the influence of their united prejudices, I subjoin a copy of the following document, which exhibits a fair sample of the natural fruits of such an alliance.

“The King to the Sheriffs of London, greeting: Whereas the Reverend Father in Christ John Bishop of London, hath signified unto us, that when he in a certain business of heretical pravity against one Bartholomew Legatt our subject of the City of London, of the said Bishop of London's diocese and jurisdiction, rightly and lawfully proceeding by acts enacted, drawn, proposed, and by the confessions of the said Bartholomew Legatt, before the said Bishop judicially made and acknowledged, hath found in the said Bartholomew Legatt very many wicked errors, false opinions, heresies, and cursed blasphemies, and impious doc-



Their victim, it is said, "continued firm in his opinions, and his death was not so well taken by the people, as to induce the King to let the Bishops make any more such examples." "He preferred," says Fuller, "that Heretics hereafter, though condemned, should silently and privately waste themselves away in prison, rather than to amuse others with the solemnity of a public execution."

Such was the persecuting spirit of that King, and of the ecclesiastics and learned men in whom he trusted, at the very time when the present authorized translation of the Scriptures was preparing under

trines, expressly contrary and repugnant to the Catholic faith and religion, and the holy word of God, knowingly and maliciously, and with a pertinacious and obdurate, plainly incorrigible mind, to believe, hold, affirm and publish, the same Reverend Father the Bishop of London with the advice and consent, as well of the Reverend Bishops and other Divines, as also of men learned in the law, in judgment sitting and assisting; the same Bartholomew Legatt by his definitive sentence hath pronounced, decreed, and declared to be an obdurate, contumacious and incorrigible heretic, and upon that occasion as a stubborn heretic, and rotten, contagious member to be cut off from the church of Christ, and the communion of the faithful; whereas the holy Mother Church hath not further to do and prosecute in this part, the same Reverend Father hath left the aforesaid Bartholomew Legatt as a blasphemous heretic to our secular power to be punished with condign punishment, as by the letters patents of the said Reverend Father in Christ the Bishop of London in this behalf, above made hath certified unto us in our Chancery. We therefore as a zealot of justice, and a defender of the Catholic faith, and willing to maintain and defend the holy church, and rights and liberties of the same, and the Catholic faith: and such heresies and errors every where what in us lieth, to root out and extirpate, and to punish with condign punishment such heretics so convicted, and deeming that such an heretic in form aforesaid, convicted and condemned according to the laws and customs of this our kingdom of England in this part accustomed, ought to be burned with fire; we do command you, that the said Bartholomew Legatt, being in your custody, you do commit publicly to the fire, before the people, in a public and open place in West Smithfield, for the cause aforesaid, and that you cause the said Bartholomew Legatt to be really burned in the same fire, in detestation of the said crime, for the manifest example of other Christians, lest they slide into the same fault, and this that in no wise you omit, under the peril that shall follow thereon. Witness, &c."



his auspices and his influence, by persons selected by him.\* At the time of Legatt's martyrdom, the work had been several years in hand, and was published in 1611: some copies have the dates of 1612, and others of 1613. In the lapse of two centuries, and with the advantages of a much more correct Greek text, than King James's translators are known to have had, it is no wonder that learned men have discovered some marks of a bias in the received version towards the opinions of the translators, and those of their royal master,† and some which they

\* The following persons were chosen to translate the Gospels, the Acts, and the Revelations. Dr. Ravis, Dean of Christ Church, afterwards Bishop of London; Dr. Abbott, Master of University College, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury; Dr. Eedes, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Savill, Dr. Peryn, Dr. Ravens, and Mr. Harmer. And to translate St. Paul's and the other canonical Epistles, Dr. Barlowe, of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, Dean of Chester, afterward Bishop of London; Dr. Hutchenson, Dr. Spencer, Mr. Fenton, Mr. Rabbett, Mr. Sanderson, and Mr. Dakins.

Is it possible to conceive that these men, or "the most ancient and grave divines" selected by the same royal authority, to whose revision their labours were subjected as "*Overseers of the Translations*," were not infected with the general persecuting spirit of the age, and at least approving, if not consenting to the execution of Legatt? There seems, indeed, to have been "*much unanimity*" among "the Bishops, other Divines and men learned in the law," on this occasion.

† Some of the King's rules "for the better ordering of their proceedings," which he recommended "to be most carefully observed," had a strong tendency to produce or to strengthen such a bias.

The 1st directs "The ordinary Bible read in the church, commonly called the Bishop's Bible, *to be followed*, and as little altered as the original will permit."

2d. "The names of the Prophets and the holy writers, with the other names in the text, to be retained, *as near as may be*, accordingly as they are *vulgarly used*."

3d. "The old ecclesiastical words *to be kept*, viz. as the word (*Church*) not to be translated *congregation*, &c." How far the licence granted under this most important "&c." was intended to extend, is not easy to determine. The 4th rule directs, that "When any word hath diverse significations, *that to be kept*, which hath been most commonly used by the most eminent Fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place, and the analogy of faith." The

had not the means of correcting. The surprise is when these circumstances are considered, that the errors which have been detected are not more numerous and more important.

I have however been loudly censured for holding that the received version contained any errors. I have been told that such objections tended to bring the whole into discredit. You will, I trust, judge otherwise. Our predecessors in the faith were not afraid to admit that the received text contained corrupted and perverted passages, and they bore this testimony at a time when persecution was still in fashion, although its royal patrons had discovered that the people no longer relished such savage entertainments, as the burning of reputed Heretics.

Our ancestors found, however, by experience, that the same spirit was living, and subjected them to long and grievous imprisonments. But at length happier times have arrived; and since you met last year within these walls, I can congratulate you most sincerely, that both you and I may now, under the protecting arm of the law, openly profess our respective sentiments concerning the proper object of worship, without any man daring to make us afraid, and without depending, as before, for security from

received faith of course must be meant here.—See Dr. Adam Clarke's "General preface" to his Edit. of the "authorized Translation," in which Fuller's high eulogium of these "worthy men, now all removed to their fathers and gone to God," and "of that gracious KING that employed them," is quoted with evident approbation.

But Fuller's equally express testimony to the King's zeal in *burning reputed heretics* is kept entirely out of sight, and that of his Bishops and other Divines, which not being so well relished by the people as heretofore, the King was at length induced to gratify their persecuting spirit and his own, in a less public manner, viz. by imprisonment for life. Yet Dr. Adam Clarke pronounces, that the work of these translators, (who it is to be hoped, knew not what spirit they were of)—"The English Translation of the Bible, made under the direction of King James the First, is the most accurate and faithful of the whole." He adds, "*Nor is this its only praise; the Translators have seized the very spirit and soul of the original!*"

injury, not on the energy of the law, but on the growing liberality of the times.

The reading of my Appeal will, I trust, have conveyed a clear, general view of my objections to the proceedings against me. I was induced to include more in it than I should have thought necessary, had not certain hints been publicly thrown out by some Disciplinarians, whose opinions are known to have much influence over others, and especially by one of the Respondents, that it was very doubtful whether you would permit the Appeal to be heard.

In such an event, carefully as I had endeavoured to avoid any breach of the rules concerning Appeals, and to conform to the regulations they enjoined, I was desirous my Appeal should contain as plain and full a summary of the leading facts of the case, as I could comprize within the limits of such a document. By having so done, however, I hope to shorten and simplify, rather than prolong and perplex the discussion, as I expect to have less to say on the several heads of it, the last excepted, until the Respondents have replied to them, as I trust they will separately and distinctly. I shall also look to them for some appropriate notice of my written defence, before the Quarterly Meeting, which will always speak the same language. A copy of it has, I have reason to believe, been long since in their hands, and consequently open to their examination.\*

It was first read in their hearing, and I may with confidence appeal to them, whether any reply to it was made, or attempted, either by the Monthly

\* One of the Respondents here observed, that they were not aware of having been ever put into possession of a copy of this document. I replied, not in *MS.* but as it is recorded in my Narrative which I happened to know had been in some of their hands as long ago as the last Yearly Meeting, and I supposed they did not mean to say or to insinuate that my address was not given in that work as it was delivered. The Respondent replied, we do not question that, but thought the expressions used referred to a copy put into our hands by the Appellant.



Meeting's Respondents, or by any member of the Quarterly Meeting, the next day, when the subject should have been discussed. They will also, I conclude, recollect that when little more than half my Address to the Meeting had been read, that Joseph Gurney Bevan remarked, "that the part they had already heard would take many hours to examine properly."

This observation of so competent a judge, was made in their presence and mine; while the impression of my Address to the Meeting was fresh in his recollection. After such an admission, which no person present offered to controvert, on what rational principle the Meeting could come to a conclusion without any previous examination of that Address, or any thing in it, is difficult to imagine. The Respondents will perhaps be able to throw some light on the hitherto unexplained grounds of the Meeting's judgment. It behoves them to do so, in order that any benefits that decision is thought likely to produce may be known, and the principles on which it is founded be understood.

Unable to ascertain either of these points, or to obtain any authentic and satisfactory information concerning them, I at length gave due notice of appeal to you. Soon after which, I much doubted the expediency of prosecuting it; not because those principles, for openly avowing which I had been accused and disowned, appeared to me less important or less sound and scriptural than before, but because I feared appealing unsuccessfully, might for a time at least, strengthen and extend the influence of a precedent which I consider radically unsound, because it goes to sanction the arbitrary imposition of unscriptural articles of faith, and to encourage an inquisitorial, intolerant and Pharisaic spirit, than which nothing is more unfavourable to a manly independent search after truth in the love of it, nor more opposed to that spirit which the gospel of Christ invariably inculcates.



Yet under such impressions as these was I disposed to concede to my accusers, without further contest, the possession of a victory obtained neither by the force of reason nor argument, but by the exercise of lordship or ecclesiastical power, by which a few zealous Disciplinarians are enabled to pronounce in the name and on behalf of a large number of their brethren, whatever they may choose to pass off as the collective sense of a Meeting for Discipline.

I was weary of such a useless and unequal contest, and increasingly satisfied with my intention to relinquish it, till I found that fresh measures were resorted to, I have every reason to believe at the instance of those many friends of other Monthly Meetings with whom these proceedings originated. Clothed indeed in another character, as the bishop was, who is said to have apologized for conduct inconsistent with the character of a Christian bishop, by saying he acted not in the quality of bishop, but of Prince. That system of defamation of which I have complained in the last section of my Appeal, has been widely extended in a manner much more injurious to the reputation of the Society than it can be to mine.\*

In my Appeal I have referred to several very important texts of Scripture, which in my apprehension clearly evince the fundamental principles of the London Unitarian Book Society, to be those of Primitive Christianity, and consequently justify me for becoming a subscriber to that society. I would now briefly review them. The first is from the 12th chapter of Mark, in which the insidious but unsuccessful attempts of "certain of the Pharisees, and of the Herodians, to catch him [Jesus] in his words," is most instructively recorded.

\* Had I been permitted I should here have read the two letters inserted, pp. 3—15, and 18—21, in order to remove from the minds of my judges the prejudices which had been so industriously excited against me by the Society's most powerful agents.

After which, it is said, "one of the Scribes came and having heard them reasoning together," as the manner of Jesus was, with those who opposed themselves to his doctrines, "and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him,—Which is the first commandment of all?" That is, of the whole ten. In answer to such a question by a Jewish Scribe well versed in their law, any other teacher than our great Lord and Master would probably have replied in the terms of that which is usually called the first commandment. "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me."

But he who had the spirit of wisdom poured out upon him, in a super-eminent degree, or without measure, and therefore "spake as never man spake," chose to use on this occasion, still more definite language, denoting with a strength and energy as great as any terms can convey, *the absolute unity of God*, and the supreme importance of openly asserting that doctrine, and of loving him above all, and our neighbour as ourselves. "And Jesus answered him [the Scribe] the first of all the commandments is, 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, is *one* Lord,'" as the received text has it, but still if possible more strongly as it ought to be rendered "Jehovah our God, is *one* Jehovah." Not *three*, nor does the text either here, or elsewhere represent the one Supreme, as "subsisting, in three most glorious persons, in the unity of essence, co-equal and co-eternal." This is language to be found in liturgies, creeds and confessions of faith, but wholly unknown to the sacred writers.

When all the circumstances under which this memorable recognition of the recorded language of Jehovah concerning himself are duly and seriously considered, they appear to me to shew what great importance Jesus Christ annexed to the consistent and unequivocal profession of this grand fundamental truth, which holds up Jehovah not as an object of gloomy superstitious terror, but of love, of reverence

and of gratitude, as the equal and all-benevolent parent of mankind. In short, as a doctrine if suffered to make its proper impression on the mind, which powerfully tends to promote the fulfilment of the whole law, love to God, and love to our neighbour.

The Evangelist, no doubt, well knowing the mind of his great Master, has materially strengthened this evidence, by shewing how it was understood by a person whom he records as being suitably impressed with the superiority of our Lord's reasoning, over that of his adversaries. For he tells us, that the Scribe said unto him, [Jesus] "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth, for there is *one* God, and there is none other but he, and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

The next passage of Scripture to which I have referred in my Appeal, is that admirable epitome of Christian doctrine which the Apostle Paul delivered to the Athenians on the following occasion, and which the Evangelist Luke has recorded in the 17th chapter of the Acts, for our instruction and preservation in the primitive Christian faith. "His spirit," says the sacred historian, "was greatly provoked within him when he beheld the city full of idols. He discoursed (the received text says "disputed,") in the synagogue with the Jews, and with those Gentiles who worshiped *God*, and in the market-place daily with such as presented themselves. Then certain philosophers—encountered him. And some said, what will this babbler say? and others, he seemeth to be a setter forth of foreign demons: because he preached to them the glad tidings of Jesus, and of the resurrection. And they took him—to the court of Areopagus, saying, 'May we know what this new



doctrine is, of which thou speakest? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we desire therefore to know what these things mean.'” In reply to these inquiries, it appears that Paul standing “in the midst of Mar’s-hill,” said,

“Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, ‘To the unknown God,’ whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands: neither is worshiped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things, and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation: that they should seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. For in him we live, and move, and have our being, as certain also of your own poets have said. For we also are his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the godhead is like unto gold or silver, or stone graven by art or man’s device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

Consistently with this most appropriate and comprehensive exposition of Christian faith, the same apostle addressing the church at Corinth—as believers in the grace of God which is given by Jesus Christ, declares, that “though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or on earth—to us [the primitive believers] there is *but one God* THE



FATHER, of whom are all things, and we in him ; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." For it was *given him*, " to be head over all things to the church." Yet as the same apostle assures us, " It is manifest that he [God even *the Father*] is excepted who did put all things under him."

In unison with this truly evangelical doctrine, the apostle writing to Timothy his own son in the faith, testifies that there is *one God*, who in the riches of his mercy—will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth—and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus—who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.

It cannot, I think, be denied that the foregoing texts amply justify as sound and scriptural every proposition contained in the fundamental principles of the London Unitarian Book Society. Surely then, no Christian society can be justified in expelling any of its members for promoting their reception among men.

As I have been held responsible for all that the preface to the book of rules of this Society contains, and much prejudice and misapprehension exists respecting the general principles of those who are usually called Unitarians, and against me, on account of my connexion with this Book Society, give me leave, in the perspicuous language of Robert Aspland, in his Plea for that class of Dissenters, " to occupy your attention for a few minutes longer by stating what is not, and what is " their" faith.\*

\* On taking up this work, an objection was made to my quoting the passage I intended, as having nothing to do with the question before the meeting. But the Clerk observed, that if the Appellant had transcribed the passage, no Friend could have had any pretence for objecting to his adducing it in his defence, and as this was evidently not done merely to save the trouble of copying, I think he should be allowed to read the passage from the work he has referred to. I then proceeded for some time without farther obstruction.

“ We do not believe,” says he, in ‘ all and every thing contained in the Book of Common Prayer :’ it has many things which we cannot find in the Bible, and some things which the Bible appears to us to discountenance and forbid ; and we hold—‘ in its full force and extent, the declaration of the sixth article—that Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation,—so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.’

“ We do not believe in the Athanasian Creed: to our understanding it is contradictory and absurd ; we consider it to be subversive of the first principle of revealed religion, the Divine Unity ; and we shudder at the solemn and awful defiance of charity and mercy, with which it opens and concludes.

“ We do not believe in ‘ Original or Birth Sin,’ consisting as explained in the ninth Article, in the ‘ corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of Adam,’ and ‘ in every person born into this world,’ deserving ‘ God’s wrath and damnation :’ we cannot conceive that there is any sin in being born ; we have been instructed by the Apostle John,\* that ‘ sin is the transgression of the law,’ and by the Apostle Paul,† ‘ that where no law is, there is no transgression,’ our reverence of the perfections of the Almighty Creator, will not permit us to suppose that he has made any creature naturally corrupt, or that *he hateth any thing which he hath made* ; and we have learnt from one apostle‡ that man is made ‘ after the similitude of God,’ from another, § that ‘ he is the image and glory of God,’ and from our Saviour,|| that children in whom human nature is fresh and

\* 1 John iii. 4.

† Rom. iv. 15.

‡ James iii. 9,

§ 1 Cor. xi. 7.

|| Matt. xix. 14.

entire, are so far from deserving, by virtue of nature, 'God's wrath and damnation,' that 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.'

"We do not believe according to the eleventh Article, that 'we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit' of Jesus Christ, and 'that we are justified by faith only:' for we receive the doctrine of Scripture, that 'he that doeth righteousness is righteous,'\* that 'God having raised up his Son Jesus sent him to bless,' us 'by turning away every one of' us 'from his iniquities,'† that at 'the judgment-seat of Christ,' we shall receive 'according to the deeds done in the body,'‡ that 'eternal life' is the merciful reward of 'patient continuance in well-doing,'§ that it is only by 'giving all diligence, and adding to our faith' every *virtue*, that we can 'make our calling and election sure,' and that thus alone 'an entrance shall be ministered unto' us 'abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord,'|| and that, therefore, it is the duty of every man, 'to prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another; for every man shall bear his own burden.'¶

"We do not believe that 'works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his spirit,' as the 13th Article asserts, 'are not pleasant to God—but have the nature of sin:' this is the doctrine of an African Saint, Augustin, but we have been taught by higher saints, Peter and Paul, that 'God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him,'\*\* and that the gospel is a revelation of "glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile."††

"For these reasons from Scripture, we are obliged

\* 1 John iii. 7.

† Acts iii. 26.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 10.

§ Rom. ii. 7.

|| 2 Peter i. 5, 10, 11.

¶ Gal. vi 4, 5.

\*\* Acts x. 34, 35.

†† Rom. ii. 10.



also to withhold our assent from the 18th Article, which declares them ‘accursed, that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature:’ this anathema seems to us to lie against the Apostle Paul, who asserts,\* that ‘the Gentiles not having the law,’ sometimes ‘do by nature the things contained in the law, being a law unto themselves,’ and shew ‘the work of the law which is written in their hearts,’ and that they who have lived ‘without the law shall not be judged by the law;’ and even against our Lord and Teacher, who expressly says,† that ‘many shall come from the east and the west, and from the north and from the south,’ (plainly intending the heathen countries), ‘and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.’

“We do not believe, as the 20th Article asserts, that ‘the church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith:’ such authority without infallibility is ridiculous, such power may uphold every superstition and sanction every ecclesiastical oppression, and both the power and the authority are inconsistent with the ‘sufficiency of the holy Scriptures’ well maintained in the article before quoted, at war with the right of private judgment, and a usurpation of the prerogative of Jesus Christ, who only has authority and power in the church, who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and who has forbidden in his disciples individually and collectively the assumption and exercise of lordship. ‡

“In these points, we do not believe in, or with the Church of England; but we do not censure, we dare not condemn its members; to their *own master they*, as well as we, stand or fall; § and we rejoice in the

\* Rom. ii. 12, 14.

† Matt. viii. 11, and Luke xiii. 29.

‡ Luke xxii. 25, 26. Matt. xxiii. 9, 10. § Mark xii. 29.



persuasion that their belief and our disbelief may be equally acceptable to heaven, if equally conceived in conscientious inquiry, and equally professed in charity.

“ But having acknowledged and explained our want of faith, let me briefly state what is the faith which we actually hold, and I must be forgiven for making the statement in the language of Scripture, because I can find no other language which would so fully, and yet so concisely, express my meaning.\*

“ We believe, then, that ‘ the Lord our God is one Lord,’ and that the profession and observance of this great truth is, ‘ the first of all the commandments.’†

“ We believe, that ‘ the hour is come, when the true worshipers should worship the Father.’‡

“ We believe, that as ‘ there is one God, the Father,’§ so ‘ there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all men, to be testified in due time.’||

“ We believe in ‘ Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by miracles, and wonders, and signs which God did by him.’¶

“ We believe, that ‘ since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead, for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive ;’\*\* that God ‘ now commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by

\* William Tuke observed, that all this was extraneous matter and had nothing to do with the case before the meeting, and he thought the Clerk should interpose and prevent the Appellant from going on. He ought, indeed, to have been stopped long ago. I replied, I have adduced nothing but what appears to me pertinent to the occasion, indeed much more so, than a great part of what the Respondents were allowed to adduce against me before the Committee of Appeals. However, as I have but very little more to add on this subject, it will take much less time to permit me to go on, than to discuss whether I am strictly in order or not.

The Clerk desired me to proceed.---

† Mark xii. 29.

‡ John iv. 23.

§ 1 Cor. viii. 6.

|| 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

¶ Acts ii. 22.

\*\* 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead ;\* that ‘ the Father hath given the Son authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man ;’ † that at Christ’s coming, is ‘ the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father—then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.’ ” ‡

When I had proceeded thus far, the Meeting adjourned about one to four the same afternoon.

Yearly Meeting, 5th Month 24th, 1814.

Afternoon Sitting.

BEING called upon by the Clerk to proceed with my defence, I rose and addressed the Meeting as follows :—

The Monthly Meeting’s Committee confessed they did not know, and refused to inform themselves what the contents of any of the works were which the London Unitarian Book Society circulated, but rested their objections to my being a subscriber, until their last visit, wholly on the contents of the preface to its book of rules.

The first paragraph asserts, that “ Christianity proceeding from God, must be of infinite importance ;” and that “ a more essential service cannot be rendered to mankind than to advance the interests of truth and virtue, to promote peace, liberty and good order in society ; to accelerate the improvement of the species—to exalt the character and secure the ultimate happiness of individuals, by disseminating right principles of religion, and by exciting the attention of men to the genuine doctrines of Revelation.” What is it this paragraph affirms ?

\* Acts xvii. 30, 31.

† John v. 27.

1 Cor. xv. 24. 28.

The divine origin of Christianity, and its supreme importance to the present and future happiness of man. No Christian can surely object to this.

But how does this Book Society propose to forward these desirable ends? Its primary and "*chief object*" in the distribution of all its books, is profess-  
edly to excite the attention of men to the Scriptures, as the sole authentic record of the "*genuine doctrines of Revelation.*" To these writings they refer as the proper touchstone of all doctrines, whether they are of divine authority or of human invention. The Society claims no infallibility in favour of any other writings, and the declared intent of distributing them is principally to induce men to search the Scriptures for themselves, and to try all doctrines by their testimony.

All other works are supposed by this Society to be more or less tinctured with error, and therefore with becoming modesty and reverence for the sacred writings, they propose "promoting Christian knowledge and the practice of virtue, *chiefly* by exciting the attention of men to the genuine doctrines of Revelation," as *therein unfolded*; and secondarily, "by distributing such books as appear to the members of the Society to contain the most rational views of the gospel, and to be most free from the errors, by which it has long been sullied and obscured." And so far as I have, during a period of more than ten years, become acquainted with the works this Society circulates, their manifest and general tenor and tendency are, to hold up the Scriptures as being of *paramount authority* in all that concerns faith and worship. Such also I have abundant reason to believe, are the serious and conscientious views of its subscribers generally, so far as my acquaintance with them enables me to judge.

"Error, voluntary or involuntary," says the writer of this preface, "so far as it extends, must have a pernicious influence. The members of this Society



think, therefore, that they are doing signal service to the cause of truth and good morals, by endeavouring to clear the Christian system from all *foreign* incumbrances, and by representing the doctrines of Revelation in their *primitive simplicity*." That is, in scriptural language, the language of Christ and his apostles. "Truth must ultimately be favourable to virtue."

The next paragraph contains the fundamental principles of the Society, which my accusers professed to approve. On reading that which follows sentence by sentence to them, that I might clearly understand what their objections to this preface were, I found reason to conclude they were nearly, if not wholly confined to the application of the term "*creature*" to Jesus Christ, the most distinguished of the prophets; and therefore asked them whether Christ was not called in Col. i. 15, "the first-born of every creature," or of the whole creation? This they granted, but said they thought the application of this apostolic language to Christ "disrespectful to his character." It seemed otherwise to me. Judge ye of this.

I will not venture, however, to justify all that this preface contains. There are some expressions in it, which are of dubious, perhaps of exceptionable import, and such as I could wish were omitted. But I never thought myself as a subscriber to this Book Society, accountable for these, but for its fundamental principles only.

The other accusation against me is, that I aided in circulating certain Remarks "which found fault with the Yearly Meeting Epistle for 1810." They did so, amidst much commendation of its general tenor and tendency, for the following reasons:—

1st. That it holds up the object of prayer, as being one "*upon whom help is laid*," that is, one who received, and therefore needed help from another; which by the uniform testimony of Scripture cannot



be predicated of the proper object of prayer, the one only true God, who is the inexhaustible source of all power, perfection and benevolence, the giver of every good and perfect gift.

2d. This Epistle quotes an important text of Scripture incorrectly, and then founds thereon an injunction to apply to Christ in secret supplication, instead of to his Father and our Father, his God and our God, to whom only did Christ direct his disciples to offer their supplications.

3d. It insinuates, that the natural talents with which mankind are endowed, were bestowed on them by Christ, whereas in Scripture these are always represented as the immediate gift of God, even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4th. It describes "the lowly-minded Saviour" as "*omnipotent*," who himself assured us, if the testimony of his Evangelists may be credited, "that *of himself* he could do nothing," that all the powers he exercised or possessed were "*given him of his Father*."

These passages in the Epistle still appear to me inconsistent with the testimony of Christ and his Apostles, as also with the general tenor of all your former annual addresses to the Church. And I wished by sober, dispassionate discussion to bring them to the test of Scripture, that it might appear whether their foundations were laid in the sand, or on the immoveable rock of genuine Revelation.

An Elder in the Society, whose style is well known, accepted this invitation under the signature of "Breviloquus." This writer defined "*omnipotence*" to be, not an incommunicable attribute of the one Supreme, as I consider it, but as something which might be "*given*" by one being and *received* by another.

Although my accusers charged me "with holding that Jesus Christ is not omnipotent, nor the proper object of worship," they refused to explain whether

they considered omnipotence as a communicable attribute, or, as an essential, inseparable attribute of the Most High God : or whether they ascribed omnipotence to the Man Christ Jesus, or held him to be “ the proper object of *supreme religious worship*.”

Yet the Committee at their first visit, distinctly admitted that when they spoke of the divinity of Christ as a doctrine of the Society, they never ascribed it to *the Man Christ Jesus*, but to that divine power which dwelt in and acted by him ; but on finding we were likely to agree upon this point, they began to hesitate, and proposed to give me their more deliberate judgment concerning it, at their next visit. But from this time they most disingenuously concealed their own opinions while they were questioning me concerning mine, “ on various important points of doctrine.”

I would now say a few words on another subject, that I may the sooner remove an erroneous impression which was made on many Friends in the Quarterly Meeting, by the Respondents’ adducing an Extract out of a work of mine, as opposing the doctrine of divine influence, and by the unfounded observations which were made thereon in my absence. I have briefly noticed them in my Appeal, but they seem to require some farther explanation.

The first time my accusers even mentioned this doctrine to me, was at the 4th sitting of the Quarterly Meeting’s Committee on my Appeal, before whom, I not only evinced this charge to be irrelevant and unfounded, but that the fair construction of the whole passage is directly opposed to that which the Respondents gave of its import. It was quoted by me from a discourse of Dr. Priestley’s, “ on the doctrine of divine influence on the human mind,” for the purpose mentioned in my Appeal ; and holds up an attention to the universal presence and constant agency of God, as “ of the greatest importance :”—that it is exerted “ by natural means, or in a regu-

lar manner ;”—that we should “ endeavour to see God in every thing, and to see every thing in God, that is, in its relation to him ;”—that we ought “ habitually to look beyond all second causes, considering them in no other light than as instruments in the hands of God, the only proper cause of all, and employed by him to accomplish in the best manner, his excellent purposes. But in the second place, it is almost of as much importance, that we consider God, not as a being incapable of foresight, but as foreseeing every thing that can ever come to pass—as acting by general laws, without ever deviating from them except for great and extraordinary purposes, and then in such a manner, as that his interposition shall be publicly known and acknowledged, so as to have the proper effect of miracles.

“ Not to respect the general presence and agency of God is practical Atheism ; it is living without God in the world ; and to expect his miraculous interpositions, and not to consider him as acting by general laws, is to encourage an enthusiasm and a delusion almost as dangerous, leading men to neglect the natural and only efficacious means of improving their characters, and to depend on certain supernatural impulses and feelings of vague and uncertain description, and that cannot have any relation to moral virtue, which consists in a supreme reverence and love of God, an entire devotedness to his will in doing and suffering, a disinterested love of his creatures and our brethren, and a just self-government equally favourable to both.

“ On the whole, the doctrine of *divine agency* and *divine influence* respecting things spiritual as well as temporal, is true, and in the highest degree important. Our characters approach to perfection, in proportion as we keep it in view, and they are debased and bad in proportion as we lose sight of it.”

With this passage before their eyes did the Respondents give no intimation of its import, nor of the



declared purpose for which I made the quotation, but passing these over in silence, most uncandidly adduced the next sentence by itself before the Quarterly Meeting, obviously calculated as it is, when thus severed from its context to make an erroneous impression. The sentence thus selected by them, is as follows:—"But the doctrine of a proper supernatural influence on the mind is false; and though, like most other false principles, it may be very innocent not in fact superseding the use of the natural means of religion, it is always delusive, and in some cases highly dangerous."\*

The Respondents did not venture to quote more than this one sentence, nor can even that be bent to their purpose, without putting a forced construction on the word *supernatural*, which as there used means *miraculous*, as is evident from the context, and its usual import. The author adds,

"Let this doctrine therefore teach us as individuals to cultivate a spirit of habitual devotion, founded on the belief of *the divine presence with us*, and of his constant agency upon us, and upon all things. This is that faith which is the sure anchor of the soul, in a tempestuous world, or rather it is the wings on which we rise above the world, and approach to a state of *union with God*."

\* In my Narrative, pp. 205, 206, I mentioned in a note upon this passage, one fatal instance of the danger of such delusion. Another case equally shocking has occurred since that event, that of an approved minister travelling under certificates from the Society here, of unity and concurrence with his religious labours, in a visit to America. How many minor instances of self-deception are daily happening, it is impossible to ascertain. But I am from long observation so strongly impressed, not only with this delusion occasionally producing suicide, but in its more ordinary operation a variety of lesser evils of no small importance, that I would earnestly recommend to the Quakers generally, as well deserving their attention, Locke's excellent chapter on Enthusiasm, in his Essay on the Human Understanding. I have often thought that chapter as apposite, as if written for their particular benefit. See the Appendix.



Such is the immediate context of that passage by which the Respondents contrived to impress the Quarterly Meeting, that I rejected the doctrine of divine influence on the human mind, or what is usually called the fundamental doctrine of the Society. I presume it cannot be needful to say more to satisfy you, that this accusation is both irrelevant and groundless.\*

So undeniably sound and scriptural is the doctrine that there is *but one God*, and that *the Father* is that *one God*, that it has been universally held by Christians of every age, wherever the religion of Jesus of Nazareth has been received. These are truths so clearly revealed in the Scriptures, that there has never been any doubt respecting them, with any persons who acknowledged the authority of those writings. But nothing like this can be said with truth concerning the supposed *Deity* of Christ, or his being the second person in the Trinity: nor concerning the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, the supposed third person in the Trinity.

All the opinions on these points which have been held by professed Trinitarians, appear to be mere inferences and deductions from certain passages of Scripture, and not that which is expressly affirmed or plainly taught by the sacred writers, and especially when due regard is paid to the context and the general drift of the passage, or of the book or Epistle where it occurs. In fact, the popular or reputedly orthodox opinions on those subjects, never were to my knowledge, and I believe never can be expressed in scriptural language.

Let any person carefully examine the Liturgy of the Church of England, or any other Trinitarian

\* The Respondents, several of whom were members of the Quarterly Meeting's Committee, on my appealing to them before your Committee of Appeals, candidly admitted that the above Extract was adduced in the manner above stated.

church, and he will find even there very strong presumptive evidence, that its compilers considered it to be most accordant to the sense of Scripture to address prayer and supreme religious worship to GOD THE FATHER, *in or through* JESUS CHRIST, that is, as his disciples. For there are comparatively very few prayers in the whole church service addressed to the second, or the third person in the Trinity, or to the three jointly.\* There are some few examples of direct religious addresses to each, but generally the *Father only* is addressed agreeably to apostolic precept and example.

The celebrated Dr. Samuel Clarke, it is well known, proposed to render the Liturgy of the Established Church more uniform and consistent, by omitting or altering every part of the service in which prayer, or supreme adoration was addressed to any other object than to God the Father. The Liturgy so reformed, has been long used by some congregations of Dissenters, who in common with the great bulk of professing Christians, consider the injunction of Christ “after this manner, therefore pray ye, Our Father who art in heaven,” &c. as authorizing the use of forms of prayer which comprise no peti-

\* The Respondents objected to this as irrelevant matter, observing that the charges against the Appellant did not relate to the doctrine of the Trinity. I told the Committee, that I believed if they permitted me to proceed, they would soon see those preliminary observations were relevant to the case. I was then allowed to go on. Before I close this note, I would observe, that at a time when all other places of worship in this country, those of the Quakers excepted, were professedly Trinitarian; the celebrated Elwall, who was tried at Stafford assizes in 1726, for publishing a book in defence of the Unity of God, generally attended their places of worship, where the devotional language, as to the object of prayer and worship was such as he could accord with, because it was Unitarian. He was, I believe, never a member of the Society, holding the lawfulness of Oaths and defensive War, but generally associated with Friends.

An interesting account of his trial is published, price 1d, and may be had of R. Hunter, bookseller, St. Paul's Church Yard, successor to J. Johnson.

tions improper for dependent beings to prefer, and such as all have need to crave, from the bountiful and benignant Parent of the Universe.

In a "list of Friends' books now on sale, which have been published in the course of the last few years, with the approbation of the Morning Meeting," I find one which appears to me to indicate a very similar view on the part of the author and of that meeting, with that which Dr. Samuel Clarke entertained as to the proper object of prayer. This work is entitled, "Correspondence without Controversy." It was written "with a view to remove prejudice, and to promote a friendly disposition towards each other—between the Church of England and the Society of Dissenters, commonly called Quakers."\*

In pursuance of 'so good a purpose, it was natural rather to magnify than to diminish "the correspondence" or similarity between them in sundry important points of doctrine. With such an object in view, and the Book of Common Prayer, including the three Creeds, the Liturgy, &c. before him, what is the amount of the "Correspondence without Controversy," which this approved author has made out with regard to the proper object of worship?

His work has shewn that this correspondence extends so far as the devotional language of the Liturgy is *scriptural* and *strictly Unitarian*. But in this effort to promote a good understanding between the parties, the author has not recognized *any distinction of per-*

\* Luke Howard observed, that if the Appellant should prove that another person was as heretical as himself, it would not prove the doctrine held by him to be that of the Society, but only of that individual, for which the Society was not answerable. If the work has been approved by the Morning Meeting for publication, I object to the propriety of saying the Society have sanctioned it. But I do not know that this work has been so approved.

I replied, if that be not granted, I can easily prove it, as I have a copy of the work with me, and a printed minute of the Meeting for Sufferings, testifying that it has been so approved, which is surely to sanction the work. This was no farther disputed and I proceeded.



*sons in the Deity*, or any religious addresses to the *second* or the *third* persons in *the Trinity*, or in any other manner acknowledged that doctrine as any proof of similarity of faith, much less of “Correspondence without Controversy.” He has nevertheless quoted with apparent approbation, the King’s declaration respecting the thirty-nine Articles, enjoining submission to them “in the plain and full meaning thereof, and in the literal and grammatical sense.” Extracts from more than twenty Prayers from the Liturgy are given in this approved work, under the heads “Absolution — Christmas day — Innocents’ day—the 6th Sunday after the Epiphany—the 9th Sunday after Trinity—the Churching of Women—the Communion,” &c. without one word of explanation what these *relics of Popery* mean, or any caution respecting them.

Yet with all this inattention to the titles under which these prayers are arranged, your approved author has evinced so much discrimination and discernment, as to adduce nothing of a Trinitarian complexion. His extracts cannot of themselves suggest such an idea to any reader, and yet one of them is selected from “the Collect for the 1st Sunday in Lent,” which is addressed to him *who did “fast forty days and forty nights.”* That is, to *the Man* Christ Jesus, to whom I readily acknowledge every tribute of love, gratitude and reverence, short of that supreme worship which is due only to his God and our God, ought to be rendered by all that are called by his name.

As to what is termed “the Divinity of Christ,” if these unscriptural terms must be used, care should be taken that they are only used in a *scriptural sense*, and that their import and application be clearly defined and understood. But on such a subject, I would say on behalf of myself and others who prefer the simplicity of Scripture language to any other, which the folly or the wisdom of man can devise,



“ why are we to be accounted heterodox, because, on *the divinity of Christ* we do not incline to go *further* than the Scripture *leads us*.”

My accusers would not agree to this test. This would not satisfy them, yet is it since that time urged *on your behalf*, by Henry Tuke, an approved minister *among you*, in a letter addressed to the Editors of the Christian Observer, and inserted at his request in that work, vol. xiii. pp. 95—100.\* It appears, that he highly esteems and strongly recommends this periodical publication, and yet it is plain that the Editors of that work carry their ideas concerning the Deity of Christ, “ *as a divine Person*,” farther than he feels warranted in following them. They wished to know “ whether, when they [the Quakers] affirm the Divinity of Christ, they mean to speak of him *as a divine Person*, or, *as a quality of the Godhead* ?” Nothing can be more easy than to give a plain intelligible answer to this question. To avow the orthodox opinion, four words only are necessary [as a divine person]. To avow the contrary opinion, requires no more than six [as a quality of the Godhead]. Instead of this direct course, Henry Tuke professing to reply concisely to this question, begins by observing, “ We can, indeed, say on this, as on every other occasion, that we believe all that the Scriptures have spoken and inculcated.”

After this, he tells us how he understands the first

\* I forbear enlarging on the contents of this letter, or on the reply to it by the Editors of this work, although I have the number for February last by me, in which they are inserted; but I would observe, that those who have read both attentively, will see, I should think, the necessity of admitting the fallibility of those writers, whose works have been generally held in the highest estimation by the members of the Society. I will only add, that the reply to this letter points out many such passages in those works, as I apprehend no judicious Friend in, or out of this meeting would now undertake to defend. I was previously acquainted with most of those exceptionable passages, but know nothing of the person who wrote these observations on Henry Tuke's letter.

verses of the gospel according to John, but not a word about divine persons in the Godhead or the doctrine of the Trinity, although he has not overlooked the head to the chapter inserted by King James's translators in order to favour that doctrine, but has in fact given their comment as an explanation of the text. Finally, he refers in a note to another work of his, first published in 1801, and at last concludes the subject in the following page, by asserting in effect the propriety of not going "further than the Scripture leads us;" and pointing out how unreasonable it is to cast the imputation of heterodoxy on those who limit their profession of faith by the testimony of the sacred writings.

"It need not be concealed," says our Friend George Stacey, pp. 21, 22, of his 'Brief Remarks on the State of Man and his Redemption by Jesus Christ,'\* "that there are passages in the sacred writings, which seem to admit of various interpretations, and to give some room for different views concerning doctrine, *more especially in the Epistles.*" In this I perfectly agree, as also that it is equally for the interests of truth and charity that this should be admitted, and the free exercise of the rights of private judgment be on that account, not only respected, but encouraged. Our author adds, "But if the occasions on which these were written, *were well considered*, and what is difficult in them brought to the test of what is *more clear* in other parts of the same apostle's writings, we should be less at a loss respecting *their true meaning.*" That is, to make the apostle his own commentator, and carefully to consider the context, as John Locke has most ably shewn in his Paraphrase on St. Paul's Epistles and the Essay prefixed to it, is the true way to promote a right understanding of those invaluable parts of Scripture.

\* This work is included in the "list of Friends' books," mentioned as approved publications, pp. 3, 4.

“ And there is one rule in the interpretation of Scripture where it can be applied,” adds George Stacey, “ which it seems right to observe—to *bring all to the standard of CHRIST’S OWN DOCTRINE*, in subjects on which he has condescended to *explain himself*.” This I conclude he has done, with regard to all the genuine and essential doctrines of Christianity, for he was “ the *author* and *finisher* of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God.” We are commanded in matters of faith to acknowledge no other master upon earth.

After laying down the above excellent rule, our author concludes the paragraph, by quoting the words of Christ, recorded in the 7th chapter of John, in the following manner:—“ If any man will do [the will of the Father] he shall know of [my] doctrine, whether it be of God.” Even in these terms the distinction, which according to the sacred writer, his great Master made, is in some degree preserved, but as it stands in the text, it is much more strongly and emphatically marked. “ Now, Jesus went up into the temple and taught, and the Jews marvelled, saying, how knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, my doctrine *is not mine*, but *His that sent me*. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, *whether it be of God*, or whether I speak of *myself*.”—John vii. 14—17.

In p. 15, after speaking in very appropriate terms “ of the love of God in Christ, as altogether adapted to the circumstances in which he [man] is placed,” our author observes, that “ *the Christian believer—sees exemplified in it, the mysterious union of the divine and human nature.*” By this observation, however, I would hope he does not mean to insinuate, that such as cannot *see this*, are not *Christian believers*. Be this as it may, on the supposition of his seeing



this, our author reasons thus:—"For that which was eclipsed or lost, being of heavenly origin, could be restored only by Him, who first breathed it into man, and that was God, "who created all things *by Jesus Christ*;"\* "the power of God and the wisdom of God."—1 Cor. i. 24.

To apply our author's own rule to the fragments of the two texts, with which he has concluded the above reasoning, that is to consider well on what occasion they were written, neither of them will, I believe, appear to be pertinently quoted. The first is Eph. iii. 9, which most evidently relates to the gospel dispensation, the subject of the Epistle. The other is 1 Cor. i. 24, in which the apostle is speaking of the effect of receiving the Christian doctrine. "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them that are called Christ, [in whose name they preached] the power of God and the wisdom of God." See Rom. i. 16, where the apostle expressly declares "the gospel of Christ," to be "the *power of God unto salvation* to every one that believeth."

"Hence *the* Christian believer," continues our author, "while he receives these and other sacred declarations of Scripture concerning the office and character of Christ into his heart, *by faith*, is led also *by the same faith*, to the acknowledgment of the Unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, not in operation merely, *but in essence*; seeing if Christ be the wisdom and power of God, he must be *One essentially with the Father*."

These metaphysical conjectures concerning the "*essence*" of the Deity, of which the sacred writers

\* Ephes. iii. 9, "These last words *by Jesus Christ*, Dr. Clarke says, are not found in the most ancient copies; and are by the learned Dr. Mills, supposed to have been added here from Col. i. 16," "Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity," p. 28.



are wholly silent, our author does not pretend to deduce from any express declarations of Scripture, but from *faith*, and after all they appear to be nothing more than the Sabellian doctrine; like Henry Tuke, our author, avoids admitting in any sense whatever a *distinction of persons* in the Deity, co-equal and co-eternal, without any inequality or difference, as Trinitarians maintain.\*

\* I must beg leave again to refer to Dr. Clarke, who observes, S. D. p. 86, that "Eusebius, through all his books against Marcellus, lays it down as the constant known doctrine of the church, that Christ himself is not—*the God over all*; but that these are the peculiar titles of the Father. And he particularly affirms, that whosoever applies these titles to the Son, *cannot be a pious person*. And he adds, that Sabellius was excommunicated as a blasphemer, for this very assertion; as confounding the characters of the Father and the Son." Again, "If any one (says Origen) is disturbed at these expressions, John xvii. 11, 'that they may be *One as We are*,' as if we favoured the opinion of those [the Sabellian heretics] who deny the Father and the Son, to be two distinct subsistencies,—let him consider that text (Acts iv. 32) 'All that believed were of one heart and one soul;' and then he will understand this, I and my Father are one thing."—Ibid. p. 119.

"They who are not careful," says Dr. Clarke, *ibid.* p. 290, "to maintain these personal characters and distinctions, but, while they are solicitous (on the one hand) to avoid the errors of the Arians, affirm (in the contrary extreme) the Son and Holy Spirit to be (indivually with the Father) the *self-existent Being*: these, seeming in words to magnify the name of the Son and Holy Spirit, in reality take away their very existence; and so fall unawares into Sabellianism, which is the same with Socinianism."

I would here call the meeting's attention to the last paragraph of the 13th section of Barclay's fifth and sixth Proposition, in order to shew that this is neither his error nor mine, as I have uniformly asserted the scriptural soundness of its doctrine concerning Jesus Christ, whereas my accusers have as constantly refused to say, whether they approve it or not. It is as follows:—"Now as the soul of man dwells otherwise, and in a far more immediate manner, in the head and in the heart, than in the hands or legs, and as the sap, virtue and life of the vine lodgeth otherwise in the stock and root, than in the branches, so God *dwelleth* otherwise in the Man Jesus than in us. We also freely reject the heresy of Apollinarius, who denied him to have any soul, but said the body was only acted by the Godhead. As also the error of Eutyches, who made the manhood to be wholly swallowed up of the Godhead. Wherefore," continues Bar-

Our author in the next place observes, "that Christ received homage, *as a divine character*, without rebuking those by whom it was offered." Doubtless he did, and he was most truly *a divine character*, and well entitled to much higher homage than appears to have been paid him on the two occasions referred to. The first is Matt. viii. 2, where in the received version, the leper whom Jesus afterwards cured is said to have "worshiped him," or more correctly "*did him obeisance*." The other is John ix. 38, where the man who was blind from his birth, after his eyes were opened, is in like manner said to have worshiped him. The preceding conference between this man and the Jews gives no manner of countenance to the notion that he offered religious worship to Christ on this occasion, for he argues the reality of the miracle with them thus:—"If this Man [Jesus] were not *of God he could do nothing*."

By our author's reference in a note, p. 15, to Acts x. 25, 26, it appears as if he thought Cornelius offered religious worship to Peter, but if he had well considered that Cornelius was "a devout man, one that feared God and prayed to God always," I should imagine he would have come to a different conclusion.

"Nor is it of little moment," adds our author, "in confirmation of *the true Christian's faith*, that the Father and the Son are *alike* designated Light and Life, *essentially so*; which cannot be assumed of any created being." No! Did not our great Master himself testify, that John the Baptist "*was a burning and a shining light*?" John v. 35. Did he not say to his disciples, "Ye are *the light of the world*—let your light so shine before men, that they may see your

clay, speaking in the name and on behalf of the Society, "as we believe he was a true and real man, so we also believe that he continues so to be glorified in the heavens in soul and body, by whom God shall judge the world in the great and general day of judgment."

good works and glorify *your Father who is in heaven?*"

That Jesus Christ was in a more eminent degree than any other Teacher sent from God a light to the world, no Christian will hesitate to acknowledge, but many to pronounce that the Father and the Son are alike designated light in the sacred writings. One of the texts adduced, 1 John i. 5, refers to God and not to Christ, as attentively marking its connexion with the two next verses, will I might say, demonstrate. How John v. 26, can possibly be thought to support such a proposition, I cannot imagine. For it in effect asserts, in unison with the uniform testimony of Scripture, that all the power of the Son is derived from the Father, and that the power of the Father which is never spoken of in those writings as being in any manner limited, is *original* and *underrived*. This is, indeed, a momentous distinction, which our great Lord and Master, whatever powers he possessed, always took care to mark in the strongest terms, and in the most decisive manner. The whole chapter almost may be quoted, to prove how utterly Jesus Christ, when performing the most unquestionable miracles, and proclaiming the great extent of the power he was ordained to exercise, disclaimed any of them being properly, speaking his own.\* "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself;"† ver. 19. Again, "I can

\* John v. 26. "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." "It seems, (says Dr. Clarke, S. D. p. 102) from the foregoing vers. 21 and 25, that the word [Life] here signifies the *power of raising from the dead*."

† "What things (saith Epiphanius), the Father doth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father being a Spirit, acts by his *own* authority; but the Son, who is also a Spirit, acts *not* by his *own* authority, as the Father does; but acts after a like manner—ministerially."

"I can of mine own self do nothing," saith our Saviour; because he is not of himself; and whosoever receives his *being*, must receive his *power* from another.—The Son then can do nothing of himself,



of mine ownself do nothing, as I hear I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who hath sent me." Verse 30.\*

Towards the bottom of the same page, our author says, "There can be no evidence of testimony, *in an equal degree certain*, or on which we can so fully rely, as that which is given to us by our holy and blessed Redeemer, who is truth itself;" and who said, "I and my Father are one."†—"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not: but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in Him." John x. 30, 37, 38.

Of the context of these texts, our author says nothing, and yet no two texts could have been chosen,

but what he seeth the Father do, because he hath no power of himself, but what the Father gave."---Bishop Pearson on the Creed, 4th Edit. p. 34. Or, S. D. p. 156.

\* "The Son, (saith Tertullian), always acted by the authority and will of the Father; for the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do." Against Praxeas, chap. 15. Or, S. D. p. 157.

† Not [*εἷς, unus*] One and the same person; but [*ἓν, unum*] One and the same thing. The meaning is, (says Dr. Clarke, S. D. p. 104) "Since none can pluck them out of *the Father's* hands, and the Father has communicated *his power* to *the Son*; therefore none can pluck them out of *the Son's* hands: so that being in *the Father's* hands, or being in *the Son's* hands, is in effect one and the same thing."

Dr. Clarke shews, that Tertullian, Novatian, Origen, Alexander of Alexandria, Chrysostom and Basil, so understood the import of the text. It may suffice to adduce part of these testimonies. "If Christ, (says Novatian), had been the Father *as the heretics imagine*; he would have said, I and my Father *am* one [one person]. But one in the neuter gender, [one thing] signifies the agreement of fellowship, not unity of person. So that the Father and Son are *one thing*, by agreement and love. The Apostle Paul also takes notice of the unity of agreement with a difference of persons. He that planteth, saith he, and he that watereth, are one [one thing]. Now every body knows, that yet Apollos was one man and Paul another, and not Paul and Apollos one and the same man."

"When our Lord says, I and my Father are one Thing, he means, (says Chrysostom), one in Power: for concerning that [viz. concerning Power] was his whole discourse."



the import of which is more obvious when the context is "well considered," or more liable to be mistaken for want of it. "Then came the Jews round about him, [Jesus] and said unto him:—How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, [the Messiah whom they looked for like unto Moses] tell us plainly. Jesus answered them; I told you and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand, my Father who gave them me *is greater than all*: and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand, I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them; Many good works have I shewed you from my Father, [the source of all] for which of these works do ye stone me? The [calumniating] Jews answered him, saying; For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou being a man makest thyself God. Jesus answered them; Is it not written in your law, I said ye are Gods? If he call them Gods, to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest; because I said I am the Son of God?" That is, the Christ, or the Messiah.\* Was ever, I might ask, a

\* Here Luke Howard requested permission to point out that this was a *false gloss*, which the Appellant had put upon a very important text of Scripture, saying he was not easy to let it pass by without some notice of it at the present time, in order to prevent the erroneous and injurious impression it might otherwise make in so large an assembly. It was spoken to in the Committee.

I admitted it had been, but not at all to my satisfaction, for I still believed it was *no false gloss*, but the genuine meaning of the text, as I observed before the Committee, John Locke had, in my ap-

vindication more complete, and the falsehood and malignity of an accusation more conclusively established? I believe not.

The effect, however, of the two texts our author has selected, when contemplated by him separately from the context, seem to have made a very different impression on his mind, for after quoting them thus, he says:—"It is true we have an evidence of testimony from the same source, which seems to contravene this assertion; where it is said, 'My Father is greater than I.'"—John xiv. 28.\* Had our au-

prehension, most conclusively shewn it to be, in his "Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures."

[See pp. 23, 26, 38, 42, 43, of a new edition of this excellent work, which has been lately published with his Essay, for the understanding of St. Paul's Epistles, and a short account of the Author's life and writings. Johnson & Co. London, price 3s. 6d. in boards; or Locke's works, vol. ii. pp. 518, 519, 523, 525.]

It was, however, my wish, that the Respondents might be allowed the freest liberty to reply to any errors I might, in their apprehension, fall into, as I should be sorry for those errors, to make any hurtful impression for want of being immediately replied to and exposed. As far as I knew my own heart, I might say, there was not a Friend present more desirous than myself of its being done as promptly, plainly and publicly as possible.

The Clerk, however, as a point of order, wished the Respondents rather to make minutes than to interrupt the Appellant, and to reply to whatever they chose after he had been heard.

I then recurred to the text, to shew the connexion, and proceeded as above stated.

\* "The plain meaning of the words is, (says Dr. Clarke, S. D. p. 162) that *God the Father is greater than the Son* absolutely: that he *that begat*, must needs (for that reason, and upon that very account) be *greater*, than *he that is begotten* of him. And that therefore the disciples, *if they really loved him*, ought to *rejoice* both for *his sake* and *their own*; that he was going to be exalted to the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty on High, even the Majesty of Him who is *greater than all*." Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Origen and several other writers, who have usually been called the fathers of the Christian church, are cited by Dr. Clarke on this subject. Of these early writers Origen seems to have expressed himself the most directly to the point at issue, I shall therefore only adduce his testimony. He says in reply to Celsus, Book viii.—"Be it so, that there are some among us, (as in such a multitude of believers there cannot but be differences of opinion) who rashly suppose, that our Saviour is the

thor "well considered" the immediate context of John x. 30, even the preceding verse only, he might have discovered a still more decisive "testimony from the same source," not even apparently contravening any assertion in the text, but really contradicting his construction of its import. "My Father," says Christ, "*is greater than all.*" As to the union which is hereafter to subsist between him and his Father, and him and his disciples, he says, ver. 20, "At that day ye shall know, that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you." But these expressions do not surely imply a personal union between him and his disciples, nor between himself, and that Almighty Being whom he taught us to consider as his Father and our Father, his God and our God.

"The Christian Believer," continues our author "however is not offended at this *seeming contrariety*," namely, that Christ declared the Father to be greater than himself. No, I believe not, for if he has read the sayings of Christ with due attention, and "well considered" their full import, no shadow of contrariety would be found between this, and any other of his recorded declarations concerning himself. They are all, not only really consistent, but obviously harmonious.

Our author tells us, however, that "*the Christian Believer considers the two-fold character* sustained by Christ, when these expressions were uttered—the *divine* and *human*; nor does he see, that in order to fulfil the glorious office of Mediator, the blessed Redeemer could possess *less perfectly* the one than *the other*. As partaking of man's nature, he was inferior to the Father; as *possessing* 'all the fulness of the Godhead,' He is One with Him, as said the apostle, 'God blessed for ever.'"

Supreme God over all [the same individual being or person with the Father: which was afterwards the heresy of Sabellius]: yet we do not think him so; who believe his own words, saying, the Father which sent me, is greater than I." S. D. p. 163.



With regard to the above notions respecting the character of Christ, and our author's deductions from them, I shall only observe, that many Christian believers may greatly prefer the more intelligible and consistent testimony of Christ, and of the sacred writers concerning his character and offices in the church, to those, or any other conjectures concerning them.

But I would briefly examine how far the texts appealed to, and in part quoted, can lend those notions any support. The 1st is Col. ii. 9. In the 1st chapter, the apostle after describing Christ as "the image of the invisible God, the head of the church, the first-born from the dead," adds, as his inference, "that in all things he might have the pre-eminence, for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Is the "true meaning" of the apostle then I would ask at all dubious, when in the same Epistle recommending the reception of the Christian doctrine to the Colossians, in its primitive simplicity, uncontaminated by the tradition of men, he reminds them that "in Him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily?"\* Especially, as the same apostle says to the Ephesians, "I bow my

\* "The fulness of the Godhead;" that is, says Dr. Clarke, "of Divine Power, Dominion and Authority. For so the word θεότης [Divinity] signifies; in the same manner as ἀνθρωπότης, and all other words of the like formation. And it is as great an abuse of language, to suppose θεότης [the Deity,] that is, the dominion of God, to signify the substance of God; as it would be to understand ἀνθρωπότης [manhood], to signify the substance of man. Where Deity is put (by a mere idiom of the English language) for God himself, as Acts xvii. 29; (in like manner as with us, the King's Majesty often means, not the Majesty of the King, but the King himself;) it is in the Greek not ἡ θεότης, but τὸ θεῖον."

"Origen styles the Father 'the Fountain of Divinity.' And he distinctly explains himself to mean thereby that the Son is styled God, upon account of the authority and dignity derived to him from the Father; and that angels and magistrates are styled Gods, upon account of the authority and dignity derived to them through the Son." S. D. p. 131.



knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. iii. 19.

The common rendering of the other text has been objected to by many learned men, as erroneous and inconsistent with the context. Locke renders it, "he who is over all, God, be blessed for ever." And although in the received version the text is, as our author has quoted it, the early Christian writers "do not apply those words to Christ, but pronounce it to be rashness and impiety to say, that Christ was God over all."\* It is not a little remarkable, that

\* "The Greek words," says Dr. Clarke, *ibid.* p. 85, "are of ambiguous construction; and may signify either, of whom Christ came; God who is over all be blessed for ever, amen: or, of whom Christ came, who is over all, God be blessed for ever, amen: or, of whom Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever, amen."

"In favour of the two former renderings, may be alleged the use of the word *Εὐλογητός*, [Blessed,] as applied generally to God the Father, by way of eminence in other places of Scripture; as Dan. iii. 28.; Psalm lxxxix. 52.; Rom. i. 25.; 2 Cor. i. 3., and 11. 31.; Eph. i. 3.; 1 Pet. i. 3.; and in that most remarkable place, Mark xiv. 61.—'Art thou the Christ, the Son of THE BLESSED?'

"To the same purpose it is also very remarkable, that not only the Apostolical Constitutions, and the larger Epistles of Ignatius, (books of dubious authority though very ancient), represent it as a branch of the Gnostick heresy to affirm Christ to be himself absolutely, *the God over all*.—But even Tertullian chargeth upon Praxeas, his styling Christ, 'The Lord God Almighty,' as equivalent to confounding him with the Father himself. And Origen calls it *rashness* (which he would not have done, if he had thought it to be the doctrine of St. Paul), to suppose Christ to be *the God over all*; as being inconsistent with his own words, 'My Father is greater than I.'—However, the words of this text being of ambiguous construction, the latter of the three fore-mentioned renderings, viz. of whom Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever, amen: was pitcht upon by our Translators as the most *obvious*. And indeed, the sense, even as thus expressed in our translation, is not difficult. For as the same apostle tells us, 1 Cor. xv. 27, that when he saith, all things are put under Christ, *it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him*: so here in like manner, when he repeats the very same thing, that *Christ is God over all*; or, as some of ancients seem to have read the text (omitting the word *θεός*), that *Christ is over all*; and chapter x. 12, that he is *Lord over all*; and Acts x. 36,

in the conclusion of more than twenty prayers of approved ministers in the Society now extant, delivered at public meetings previous to 1695, and taken in short-hand, the very words of this text are adopted, but applied to the Father. Did these men pray with the spirit and with the understanding also, or were they all mistaken in the application of these terms, or is the text in the received version erroneously rendered?

The four first verses of this Epistle if “well considered,” render it so clear that in the estimation of the apostle, the Father alone was God over all, that the correction of the above text might almost be justified on that ground only; but the same apostle having assured us elsewhere that to us Christians, there is but one God even the Father, the presumptive evidence against the common reading of this text is as strong as can easily be imagined.

I have thus briefly reviewed such parts of some of the latest approved works which relate to those important points of doctrine, on which I have been called in question, for the sake of shewing how com-

he is *Lord of all*; it is manifest again, that HE must needs be excepted, by communication of whose divine power and supreme authority, *Christ is God or Lord over all.*”

“Christ, (saith Justin), is Lord of Hosts, according to the will of the Father who gave them that power. And Clemens Alexandrinus: the Lord of all ministering to the will of the Supreme Father. And again, to Him is subject the whole army of angels and of Gods [aluding to Ps. xcvi. 7, ‘Worship him all ye Gods,’]—upon account of him who put all under him.

“And Tertullian: He is Lord of Hosts, because all things are put under him by his Father.

“And Hippolytus: He is God over all; for so he says expressly, ‘All things are given unto me of my Father.’

“And Novatian: Having always power over all things, but a power delivered, a power given, a power granted to him from his Father.”

Before the Committee of Appeals, Luke Howard represented me as not warranted in stating, that “the early Christian writers” did not apply the words in Rom. ix. 5, to Christ, adding that I should have produced my authorities. This call upon me I have now at-

paratively unimportant those shades of difference, or perhaps only of phraseology are, by which those who unite in rejecting the doctrine of a distinction of persons in the Deity, appear to be divided in opinion. Nor are the practical consequences of any of these variations at all similar to those which naturally spring out of the reception of the doctrine of the Trinity, and have been in fact generally associated with that tenet.

For instance, the doctrine of original sin, or innate depravity, and the opinions usually connected therewith, as our Friend George Stacey, most justly observes, are "doctrines which impugn the power and goodness of God." The reception of these fearful doctrines is hardly compatible with a belief in the simple unity of God, void of all personal relations. Nor do I know that they have ever been associated with any consistent profession of that scriptural doctrine.

The sanction of the Morning Meeting "to the *common* doctrine of the Trinity," in a late work approved by them, I would hope was given rather inadvertently than by design.\* The recognition of any new tenet by a religious society, or any new explanation of an old one, where human formularies

tended to, by producing a variety of pertinent passages from the learned and candid Dr. Clarke, and through him, not from "Ebion, Cerinthus and such writers," as the Respondent insinuated, but from those who are generally called the fathers of the Christian church, to whose testimony Barclay has so largely appealed in his Apology.

\* This work is entitled, "Remarks suggested by the perusal of a Portraiture of Primitive Quakerism. &c." I would refer to the two first paragraphs, to shew the meeting, in the words of its approved author, his judgment concerning the principles of the Society. He says, on what grounds I know not, "Many attempts have lately been made by Unitarian writers, to identify their faith with that of the Quakers; but it has been sometimes done rather covertly than openly." I do not say such "attempts" have not been made, but if they have, it has not fallen under my notice. Nor can I imagine



of faith are deemed necessary in Christian churches, should at least be "*well considered*," and the import of every proposition, and its agreement with Scripture doctrine be accurately weighed. And even then, experience has largely shewn the ill success of such efforts to promote their professed object, an uniformity of opinion concerning the doctrines of religion.

Perhaps the most plausible forms under which these attempts have been made, are those which are called Scriptural Catechisms. But even in these, although the answers may be expressed in the very terms of Scripture, unless they are also in their true import, rightly applicable to the questions prefixed,

that any writers in much esteem among the Unitarians, would consider such an object of sufficient importance to make any attempt of the kind. If they had, I should most likely have known it.

Your approved author adds, the "*Devotional Extracts*" were given to the world with this design. Now, as the Editor of this work, I disclaim any such intention. Its object was to shew, what the devotional language of this Meeting had been from 1678 to 1810, by faithful extracts from its annual Epistles during that time, and the most pertinent in each Epistle that I could find. Your author next bears his testimony to the fidelity of this selection, by saying, "but they could not be sufficiently divested of those expressions that ascribe worship to the Saviour, to answer this purpose effectually." They were, however, quite sufficient for mine. Your author continues, "Yet the compiler *perhaps* thought, that to gain half a purpose was better than to gain nothing at all, and might therefore wish to give to the principles of that Society a character irreconcilable to the common doctrine of the Trinity."

If this be not to represent your principles, and that doctrine as coalescing or uniting with each other, I am unable to discover the import of these expressions. But as if it were to remove all doubt of such being the author's intention, he add, "thus endeavouring to consign the Quakers to the invidious condition of the Bat in the fable, neither bird nor beast with all its pernicious consequences."

Such is the language in which this doctrine is recognized as expressly according with the faith of the Society, in a work which your licensors of the press have sanctioned, and which the Meeting for Sufferings have directed to be circulated throughout the nation for the general information of Friends.



nothing can well be more delusive. The doctrines contained in the Scriptures, when viewed in their natural connexion with the context, and above all, when brought "to the standard of Christ's own doctrine," appear to the most advantage, the most honourable to God, the most beneficial to man, and the most likely to produce their proper effect upon the mind.

Only a few years ago, after authorizing the publication of the first part of a Catechism, entitled "Early Christian Instruction," &c. you referred the consideration of continuing the work to the Meeting for Sufferings. It remained under their care no less than two years, when in my mind you very judiciously concurred in a report from that meeting, intimating after so much attention as they must have paid to the subject during that time, that it was too nice an undertaking to enter very minutely into points of doctrine, and to publish the work in the name and on behalf of the Society.

On which ground, if my memory serves me, it was agreed that any thing farther that might be published in pursuance of that object, should appear in the name of an individual, and not under the express sanction of the Society. If I have mistaken the grounds of this conclusion, my apology must be, that I have been refused access to the records. Had I been permitted to consult them on this, and a few other points, I should only have referred to such parts as on examination appeared to me material to my case, and by quoting them correctly, have enabled you, with less loss of time, to determine how far they may affect the questions at issue.

For the same purpose I wished to have shewn, that by another report from the Meeting for Sufferings, which was also read in my hearing, and the minute you made thereon, that the imprimatur rule, which was hastily agreed to in 1801, has been since

that time *virtually repealed*, by the sanction you have given to that meeting to appoint Sub-Committees to inspect periodical publications, and to reply to such articles in them as they might judge necessary. I approved this measure, and considered it from that time as in effect doing away a minute which on the face of it requires to "*be invariably observed.*" And accordingly since that time, persons in every station in the Society, Ministers and Elders not excepted, have acted as if no such rule defaced the book of Extracts. Upon what principle then can the proceedings against me, so far as they are founded on a supposed breach of the above-mentioned imprimatur rule, be consistently justified?

I also wished to see whether the written records of your meeting would confirm, strengthen, or invalidate the very striking picture which Gough has drawn of its eminently tolerant spirit towards George Keith, under all the fanciful, unscriptural notions he entertained, if he would only have been content with openly professing them, and had not insisted on imposing them on his brethren. As the case is stated by Gough, vol. iii. pp. 321, 327—329, 335, and 383, I cannot readily imagine any thing much more directly opposed to the principle of the proceedings in my case. But as it may be objected that Gough has given a partial view of those proceedings, I was desirous of going to the fountain-head for information, that I might know, so far as that could inform me, the real character of those memorable proceedings. I have for many years considered them highly creditable to the Society, and well entitled to its attention and imitation in every subsequent age.

The records of the primitive Christian church, however, contain the best precepts and the brightest examples concerning the exercise of the rights of private judgment. The articles of faith which were then required as requisite for religious fellowship

were few, plain and simple, but highly important and conducive not only to peace and charity, but equally adapted to awaken and to preserve a love of truth, a fearless profession of it, a deep reverence for its author, the God of truth, and a consequent increase of true believers. Contrary maxims have always produced opposite fruits, of which the pages of ecclesiastical history afford mournful, but instructive evidence.

From the period of the Reformation, however, the lumber which had accumulated during the dark ages of the church, has been gradually removing, as the sacred writings have been more freely unfolded; and the professors of Christianity been induced to search the Scriptures, and disregarding the fear of man openly and freely to avow the result of their examination. During the whole of this contest, the two parties forming in fact the Christian world, have been divided in opinion on two principles which are irreconcilably opposed to each other. The one assumes, that, the Christian church is from time to time duly authorized to propound articles of faith in unscriptural terms, and to impose them on its members. The pleas for exercising this power in substance are, the supposed danger of diversity of opinion from reading the Scriptures, without the aid of an authorized comment by the church, and the supposed safety of relying on its spiritual discernment.\*

\* As the proceedings in this and in other similar cases appear to be taken up, to secure the church from the danger and imputation of heresy and schism, I would refer the reader to John Locke's postscript to his first Letter on Toleration, where he has very conclusively shewn, that the pursuit of such objects by any church, is to incur those imputations which it proposes to guard against. That those only are, or can be Heretics or Schismatics, who separate themselves from any church, holding the Scriptures to be the sole rule of faith, because she "does not publicly profess some certain opinions which the Holy Scriptures do not expressly teach;" or those who under the same profession, however numerous or powerful, exclude others out



The other and more ancient principle which was held before "the Gospel Dove was strangled in the embraces of the Imperial Eagle," asserts the sufficiency and the plainness of the Scriptures in a correct text or translation, in all that regards faith and worship, without the assistance of note or comment. It claims for every Christian an equal and unalienable right to examine their testimony, and to judge of it for himself; and consequently denies the right of any church or assembly to require of its members a profession of any articles of faith which are not plainly and expressly laid down as such, in the New Testament.

The Church of Rome holds one of these principles. All consistent Protestants adhere to the other. Any infringement of it is to violate the sacred, the fundamental principle whereon the Reformation was founded, and can alone be justified. The last number of the Philanthropist contains in a Review of "Gilpin's Lives of the Reformers," so clear and so masterly a defence of that principle, that I cannot forbear quoting one paragraph from it. It is as follows :—

"If the propriety of translating the Scriptures be established and acknowledged, other consequences follow which are not in general observed. The translation of the Scriptures is only good, if schism and dissent are good, and not otherwise. If schism and dissent are evil, so also is the translation of the Scriptures. If the opinions of the church are alone to be followed, and if the adoption of any other opinions is evil, the proper course undoubtedly is to confine the Bible to those who manufacture the opinions of the church, and to give to the people only the opinions which are made for them. The Church of

of her communion, because they will not profess their belief of certain opinions which are not the express words of Scripture.---"Both these," says Locke, "*are heretics*, because they err in fundamentals, and err obstinately *against knowledge*." Works, vol. ii. p. 266.



Rome reasoned accurately and consistently, by refusing the use of the Bible to the laity, when it established their incompetency to form opinions for themselves. The Church of England manifests a woful incapacity of reasoning, when it maintains that the Bible should be translated and read, and yet that there is any duty or propriety whatsoever in following the opinions of the parish priest more than the opinions of any other man. Surely the reading of the Bible is good only, if it is good to judge of it according to the dictates of the reader's understanding. It can answer no other purpose. If this is not good, it is merciful to keep the Bible out of his hands; it is merciful to keep him from the chance and from the temptation of error. Whoever talks of schism and dissent as any thing else than desirable and good,\* is in reality, therefore, not a Protestant; he avows the very principle of Popish tyranny and the source of Popish corruption; he lays down the servitude of the human mind as the foundation of his system; he actually, and in truth condemns the translation and perusal of the Bible. So very nearly are Popish high church and Protestant high church related!" Vol. iv. p. 126.

Recognizing these principles as purely Christian and Protestant, it is evident I cannot consistently look to you for any authoritative confirmation of any doctrines or opinions which appear to me sound and scriptural. But I do look to *some* of the Respondents to shew how they imagine such principles can be

\* Here Luke Howard inquired, whether I meant to assert that schism and dissent were good in themselves, as the passage just read seemed to imply? I replied, the Committee may see that it is rather the comparative than the positive good of schism and dissent of which this passage speaks. But I have no hesitation in expressing my firm persuasion, that any evils attendant upon the freest avowal of dissent even from doctrines both true and important, are far less than those which necessarily flow from discouraging or restraining in any manner the exercise of the rights of private judgment.

openly avowed and publicly countenanced, consistently with an approval of those inquisitorial and intolerant proceedings which they are appointed to defend.

I am at present utterly unable to comprehend this, but I shall be willing to listen with attention to their explanation ; and I can truly say, whatever variation of sentiment there may be, between any of my fellow-professors of faith in Christ Jesus, within the Society in which I was born and educated, and those which I entertain, I have no desire to obtrude my sentiments upon others farther than they are true, and appear so to their understandings.\*

I am very ready to allow, that there is no merit whatever in merely holding true doctrines, however commendable it may be to search after religious truth,

\* I have, however, much reason to conclude, that the proceedings against me chiefly arose from the offence certain Disciplinarians had taken at the occasional expression of my sentiments in *Meetings for Discipline*. The Monthly Meeting's Committee let out this secret at their first visit, by expressing the dissatisfaction of Friends at my general conduct in this respect "*for ten years past.*" See my Narrative, pp. 63, 100, 125, 126, and pp. v.—viii. of the preface. The Respondents on this appeal betrayed a *similar feeling*, by describing me as attending their "*Meetings for Discipline*" and "*legislating for them,*" because I sometimes expressed my sentiments on subjects under consideration. Another cause for my expulsion, with the *secret junta*, who all along prompted the agents ostensibly employed, to deal with me, was, I have no doubt, to deprive me *through the medium of disownment*, of the hitherto acknowledged right of its members to inspect the records of the Society. The new and absolute restriction of this right was expressly made on a mere *ex parte* statement of the present Clerk of the records, to the Meeting for Sufferings, that I had claimed this right, which had never before been denied me. To the jealousy thus excited among the ruling Disciplinarians, "*the many friends of other meetings,*" with whom these proceedings originated, and by whom they were supported, I attribute the cause of my expulsion, much more than to any of the grounds on which it was ostensibly founded. This will not surprise the candid reader, when he considers the above circumstances, and the pertinacity with which I was refused all access to the records, as related in pp. 25—27 of this work. If, however, this conjecture be ill-founded, I hope it will be distinctly shewn to be erroneous.

as after a treasure of inestimable value ; nor any demerit in not attaining a correct knowledge of doctrinal truths, unless it arises from blamable negligence, indifference, or the prevalence of a worldly spirit.

It is, however, highly important to us all, to be faithful to our convictions of truth, after we have sought it diligently in the love of it, and to be obedient to the practical precepts of the gospel, and to that law which was to be written under the new covenant, not upon tables of stone, but upon the fleshly tables of the heart, whether it has pleased infinite wisdom to confer upon us the five, the ten talents, or the one talent only. Our business, is faithfully to occupy therewith till Christ shall come, "and then he will reward every man according to his works." Matt. xvi. 27.

Duly contemplating these solemn truths, and that unavoidable diversity of sentiment which arises out of the very constitution of our nature, as the workmanship of God, and created in his image, let us with increasing assiduity cultivate that healing spirit of love and charity, which our divine Master declared to be the best mark of discipleship. May we also be more and more animated by the cheering prospect held out to us by the gospel, of meeting hereafter, under happier circumstances for distinguishing truth from error and communicating our thoughts one to another, when we shall no longer see things as through a glass darkly, but know even as we are known.

Having delivered the foregoing address to a very large and attentive audience, consisting I suppose of about twelve hundred persons, I sat down. After a short pause, the Clerk asked, if I had any thing more to offer to the Meeting?

I replied, I have not, except it be to say that I hope the Respondents will be satisfied with vindicating in the best manner they are able the recorded



charges against me, or at least will not attempt as they did before the Committee, to make me responsible for the soundness of opinions which I have never maintained, or for whatever they may deem objectionable in the works circulated by the London Unitarian Book Society. In becoming one of its subscribers I had no idea that I thereby made myself accountable for all which those works might contain. Nor would I have joined this or any other Society upon such terms, either expressed or understood.

Some works are admitted into its catalogue which are known to contain sentiments adverse even to its fundamental principles. These, it is nevertheless thought, may promote a spirit of inquiry, and thereby aid the cause of truth. The works of the late Archdeacon Blackburne, an able assertor of the rights of private judgment, are of this number, and contain strong censures on Unitarianism, which was far from being consonant with the Archdeacon's views of scriptural doctrine. I might, therefore, on the plea the Respondents have urged, be accused of being a Trinitarian, and in fact of holding at the same time directly opposite tenets. There is not, I am fully persuaded, a single member of this Book Society who considers himself responsible for the soundness of any of its works, except it be so far only as they are conformable to the genuine doctrines of Revelation, as laid down in the Scriptures. And of this, we wish every person, to judge for himself.

Such are the principles of our Association, as avowed in the Preface to our Book of Rules, which the Respondents must have entirely mistaken or overlooked, or surely they could never have imputed to me an approval of opinions merely because they appeared to them to be erroneous, and were to be found in some of its publications. I therefore solemnly protest against the injustice of attempting to make me responsible for any thing more than its fundamental principles, on account of my connexion with this Book Society.



The Respondents being now called upon to reply, Josiah Forster rose, and said :—" We are appointed to defend *the decision* of the Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex, in confirming the disownment of Thomas Foster, by Ratcliff Monthly Meeting, not to enter into so large a field of irrelevant matter as the Appellant has chosen to adduce.\*

\* In p. 49, I expressed an opinion that the reply of the Respondents before the Committee of Appeals, " was neither consistent nor scriptural." The above definition, before so large an assembly, of what they are " appointed to defend," reminded me of the grounds on which that "*decision*" was built. Before the Committee, the Respondents defended "*the decision*" as proper and necessary, but they seldom adverted to any of the most material parts of the proceedings on which that decision was founded, without making such concessions as with competent and impartial judges would have been fatal to the cause they were appointed to advocate. For instance, there was no rule of the Society which bore on the case. It was not a very strong Monthly Meeting that took it up.—Its Committee in their conferences with the Appellant did their best---and adduced such texts of Scripture as *they thought* pertinent, which, whether relevant or *not*, equally shewed their care. As to their questioning the Appellant, and in some other respects the proceedings were not such as the Respondents could have wished. In their report to the Monthly Meeting, the Committee expressed themselves as *they thought* correctly.---In short, it might have been better if the proceedings had been more judicious, correct and regular, less inquisitorial and precipitate. Yet, with all these acknowledged defects, were they in effect held up in the lump as being founded "*in the power and wisdom of God !*" The following minute was quoted for this purpose.

" Our Monthly and Quarterly Meetings being set up by the power and in the wisdom of God, which is the authority of those meetings, all Friends are tenderly desired and advised carefully to keep to, and in that authority; and therein manage all the business and affairs of the said meetings, in discharge of their duty to God and his church; and not expect or depend upon this meeting for particular direction from time to time, how they shall proceed in the management of the concerns of those meetings, relating to truth's testimony and service; but wait for, and depend upon, the power and wisdom of God for counsel and direction, in such matters and cases as may come before them." Book of Extracts, p. 43.

As to many of the opinions imputed to me as erroneous, the Respondents did not deem it necessary to shew. I had ever professed them; nor to compare them with Scripture doctrine to prove they were erroneous. Their principal test of truth appeared to be the doctrine which *they imagined* George Fox preached, and his fol-

“ It does not appear to be our duty on this occasion to go into any general defence of the doctrines of Christianity, but to prove that the Appellant has promoted the circulation of doctrines contrary to those held by the Society. If it were to be understood that any general discussion of doctrines was proper to be entered into on such an occasion, rules for conducting the disputation ought to be laid down. But I suppose the meeting will not hold the Respondents under any obligation to discuss such subjects as the Appellant has introduced, a great part of which do not properly relate to the case at issue.”

Luke Howard, now rose, and said, “ I shall, however, claim the right, not so much in the character of a Respondent, as in that of a Member of the Yearly Meeting, to reply to such parts of the Appellant’s address as I may deem necessary, in order to remove the injurious impression they may have made ; and especially to point out at a proper time, as I suppose the meeting will not sit much longer this evening, a *false gloss* which the Appellant put on a very important text of Scripture.”

The Clerk observed, “ The Respondents have an undoubted right *as such*, to use their own discretion in replying to whatever parts of the Appellant’s address they may think proper. But I feel myself called upon to say, they can only claim to be heard on the case before the meeting, in the character of Respondents. It is my wish to act with strict impartiality.”

Several of the Respondents plainly indicated dissatisfaction with this judgment of the Clerk, but without re-asserting their claim. Luke Howard

lowers held. Of these, such as were supposed to favour their own views were held up, as being almost of divine authority, whilst others, although more plain, rational, consistent and scriptural, though professed by the same writers, or sanctioned by the Society under a *modern imprimatur* rule, were represented as not implicating the Society, and of no authority whatever---the mere sentiments of fallible individuals.

rose again, saying, "The Appellant has adduced in his defence, the opinions of several individuals on points of doctrine. He has canvassed the sentiments of Henry Tuke, of Wm. Candler, of George Stacey, and of Wm. Allen.\* He has tried a number of passages in a work of George Stacey's, by the evidence and authority of the late Dr. Samuel Clarke. All this I deem irrelevant matter, and I hope the meeting will consider the Respondents as disclaiming much that the Appellant has advanced, although they might not particularly reply to such parts of his address."

Wm. Tuke and several other Friends said, that a large proportion of what the meeting had heard from the Appellant was irrelevant matter, such as he ought not to have been allowed to produce; and some general cautions were thrown out to those who were present, and especially to the youth, to be upon their guard against the hurtful impressions it might have made; and an earnest wish was expressed, that those who had heard the Appellant might as much as they well could, attend the next afternoon to hear the reply of the Respondents. I cordially approved this recommendation, and could hardly forbear seconding it; but I waved so doing, as being unnecessary, after what I had before said.

\* I think it cannot be said, that I expressly canvassed any of the opinions of Wm. Allen, in my address to the meeting. or even alluded to any he had held or countenanced, except it was to approve them. In an early part of it, p. 63, I did, it is true, call upon the Respondents to take some appropriate notice of my still unanswered address to the Quarterly Meeting, as inserted in my Narrative (pp. 256---295, and 300---335) long since in their hands. In this work there are some remarks in the form of notes, on the impressive speech of Wm. Allen in that meeting. See pp. 359---363.---Perhaps Luke Howard referred to these, as I do not know that I ever canvassed any other opinions of William Allen's. And if so, I recommend those remarks once more to his cool examination. They are well worthy his attention, and were sent me as I acknowledged by a Friend of mine, who heard the speech delivered, and was in common with many others sensible of the effect it produced.

Stephen Grellet, a minister from America, on a religious visit to this country, commended the orderly deportment of those who had attended the discussion. The meeting adjourned about half after six to four the next afternoon.

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# APPENDIX.

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AN

## ESSAY ON ENTHUSIASM,

BY JOHN LOCKE,

BEING

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER OF THE FOURTH BOOK OF HIS  
ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.

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### *Sect. I. Love of Truth necessary.*

HE that would seriously set upon the search of truth, ought in the first place to prepare his mind with a love of it: for he that loves it not, will not take much pains to get it, nor be much concerned when he misses it. There is nobody in the commonwealth of learning, who does not profess himself a lover of truth: and there is not a rational creature that would not take it amiss to be thought otherwise of. And yet, for all this, one may truly say, there are very few lovers of truth for truth's sake, even amongst those who persuade themselves that they are so. How a man may know whether he be so in earnest, is worth inquiry: and I think there is this one unerring mark of it, *viz.* the not entertaining any proposition with greater assurance, than the proofs it is built upon will warrant. Whoever goes beyond this measure of assent, it is plain, receives not truth in the love of it; loves not truth for truth's sake, but for some other by-end. For the evidence that any

proposition is true, (except such as are self-evident), lying only in the proofs a man has of it, whatsoever degrees of assent he affords it beyond the degrees of that evidence, it is plain all that surplusage of assurance is owing to some other affection, and not to the love of truth: it being as impossible, that the love of truth should carry my assent above the evidence there is to me, that it is true, as that the love of truth should make me assent to any proposition, for the sake of that evidence, which it has not, that it is true; which is, in effect, to love it as a truth, because it is possible or probable that it may not be true. In any truth that gets not possession of our minds by the irresistible light of self-evidence, or by the force of demonstration, the arguments that gain it assent, are the vouchers and gage of its probability to us; and we can receive it for no other than such as they deliver it to our understandings. Whatsoever credit or authority we give to any proposition more than it receives from the principles and proofs it supports itself upon, is owing to our inclinations that way, and is so far a derogation from the love of truth, as such: which, as it can receive no evidence from our passions or interests, so it should receive no tincture from them.

*Sect. 2. A Forwardness to dictate, from whence.*

The assuming an authority of dictating to others, and a forwardness to prescribe to their opinions, is a constant concomitant of this bias and corruption of our judgments: for how almost can it be otherwise, but that he should be ready to impose on others' belief, who has already imposed on his own? Who can reasonably expect arguments and conviction from him, in dealing with others, whose understanding is not accustomed to them in his dealing with himself? Who does violence to his own faculties, tyrannizes over his own mind, and usurps the prerogative

gative that belongs to truth alone, which is to command assent by only its own authority, *i. e.* by and in proportion to that evidence which it carries with it.

### *Sect. 3. Force of Enthusiasm.*

Upon this occasion I shall take the liberty to consider a third ground of assent, which, with some men, has the same authority, and is as confidently relied on as either faith or reason: I mean enthusiasm; which, laying by reason, would set up revelation without it. Whereby, in effect, it takes away both reason and revelation, and substitutes in the room of it the ungrounded fancies of a man's own brain, and assumes them for a foundation both of opinion and conduct.

### *Sect. 4. Reason and Revelation.*

Reason is natural revelation, whereby the eternal Father of light, and fountain of all knowledge, communicates to mankind that portion of truth which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties: revelation is natural reason enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by God immediately, which reason vouches the truth of, by the testimony and proofs it gives; that they come from God. So that he that takes away reason, to make way for revelation, puts out the light of both, and does much the same, as if he would persuade a man to put out his eyes, the better to receive the remote light of an invisible star by a telescope.

### *Sect. 5. Rise of Enthusiasm.*

Immediate revelation being a much easier way for men to establish their opinions, and regulate their conduct, than the tedious and not always successful labour of strict reasoning, it is no wonder that some

have been very apt to pretend to revelation, and to persuade themselves that they are under the peculiar guidance of heaven in their actions and opinions, especially in those of them which they cannot account for by the ordinary methods of knowledge, and principles of reason. Hence we see, that, in all ages, men, in whom melancholy has mixed with devotion, or whose conceit of themselves has raised them into an opinion of a greater familiarity with God, and a nearer admittance to his favour, than is afforded to others, have often flattered themselves with a persuasion of an immediate intercourse with the Deity, and frequent communications from the Divine Spirit. God, I own, cannot be denied to be able to enlighten the understanding by a ray darted into the mind immediately from the fountain of light. This they understand, he has promised to do; and who then has so good a title to expect it, as those who are his peculiar people, chosen by him, and depending on him?

#### *Sect. 6. Enthusiasm.*

Their minds being thus prepared, whatever groundless opinion comes to settle itself strongly upon their fancies, is an illumination from the Spirit of God, and presently of divine authority; and whatsoever odd action they find in themselves a strong inclination to do, that impulse is concluded to be a call or direction from heaven, and must be obeyed; it is a commission from above, and they cannot err in executing it.

§ 7. This I take to be properly enthusiasm, which, though founded neither on reason nor divine revelation, but rising from the conceits of a warmed or overweening brain, works yet, where it once gets footing, more powerfully on the persuasions and actions of men, than either of those two, or both together: men being most forwardly obedient to the impulses they receive from themselves; and the



whole man is sure to act more vigorously, where the whole man is carried by a natural motion. For strong conceit, like a new principle, carries all easily with it, when got above common sense, and freed from all restraint of reason and check of reflection, it is heightened into a divine authority, in concurrence with our own temper and inclination.

*Sect. 8. Enthusiasm mistaken for Seeing and Feeling.*

Though the odd opinions and extravagant actions enthusiasm has run men into, were enough to warn them against this wrong principle, so apt to misguide them both in their belief and conduct; yet the love of something extraordinary, the ease and glory it is to be inspired, and be above the common and natural ways of knowledge, so flatters many men's laziness, ignorance and vanity, that when once they are got into this way of immediate revelation, of illumination without search, and of certainty without proof, and without examination, it is a hard matter to get them out of it. Reason is lost upon them; they are above it: they see the light infused into their understandings, and cannot be mistaken; it is clear and visible there, like the light of bright sunshine; shews itself, and needs no other proof, but its own evidence; they feel the hand of God moving them within, and the impulses of the spirit, and cannot be mistaken in what they feel. Thus they support themselves, and are sure reason hath nothing to do with what they see and feel in themselves; what they have a sensible experience of, admits no doubt, needs no probation. Would he not be ridiculous who should require to have it proved to him, that the light shines, and that he sees it? It is its own proof, and can have no other. When the Spirit brings light into our minds, it dispels darkness. We see it, as we do that of the sun at noon, and need not the twilight of reason to shew it us. This light

from heaven is strong, clear and pure ; carries its own demonstration with it ; and we may as rationally take a glow-worm to assist us to discover the sun, as to examine the celestial ray by our dim candle, reason.

§ 9. This is the way of talking of these men : they are sure, because they are **sure** ; and their persuasions are right, only because **they** are strong in them. For, when what they say is stripped of the metaphor of seeing and feeling, this is all it amounts to ; and yet these similes so impose on them, that they serve them for certainty in themselves, and demonstration to others.

*Sect. 10. Enthusiasm, how to be discovered.*

But to examine a little soberly this internal light, and this feeling on which they build so much : these men have, they say, clear light, and they see : they have an awakened sense, and they feel : this cannot, they are sure, be disputed them. For, when a man says he sees or he feels, **nobody** can deny it him that he does so. But here let me ask ; this seeing, is it the perception of the truth of the proposition, or of this, that it is a revelation from **GOD** ? This feeling, is it a perception of an inclination or fancy to do something, or of the Spirit of **GOD** moving that inclination ? These are two very different perceptions, and must be carefully distinguished, if we would not impose upon ourselves. I may perceive the truth of a proposition, and yet not perceive that it is an immediate revelation from **GOD**. I may perceive the truth of a proposition in Euclid, without its being, or my perceiving it to be a revelation : nay, I may perceive I came not by this knowledge in a natural way, and so may conclude it revealed, without perceiving that it is a revelation from **GOD** ; because there be spirits, which, without being divinely commissioned, may excite those ideas in me, and lay them in such order before my mind, that I may per-

ceive their connexion. So that the knowledge of any proposition coming into my mind, I know not how, is not a perception that it is from God. Much less is a strong persuasion, that it is true, a perception that it is from God, or so much as true. But however it be called light and seeing, I suppose, it is at most but belief and assurance: and the proposition taken for a revelation, is not such as they know to be true, but take to be true. For where a proposition is known to be true, revelation is needless: and it is hard to conceive how there can be a revelation to any one of what he knows already. If therefore it be a proposition which they are persuaded, but do not know to be true, whatever they may call it, it is not seeing, but believing. For these are two ways, whereby truth comes into the mind, wholly distinct; so that one is not the other. What I see I know to be so by the evidence of the thing itself; what I believe, I take to be so upon the testimony of another: but this testimony I must know to be given, or else what ground have I of believing? I must see that it is God that reveals this to me, or else I see nothing. The question then here is, how do I know that God is the revealer of this to me; that this impression is made upon my mind by his Holy Spirit, and that therefore I ought to obey it? If I know not this, how great soever the assurance is that I am possessed with, it is groundless; whatever light I pretend to, it is but enthusiasm. For whether the proposition supposed to be revealed, be in itself evidently true, or visibly probable, or by the natural ways of knowledge uncertain, the proposition that must be well-grounded and manifested to be true, is this, that God is the revealer of it, and that what I take to be a revelation, is certainly put into my mind by him, and is not an illusion, dropped in by some other spirit, or raised by my own fancy. For, if I mistake not, these men receive it for true, because they presume God revealed it. Does it not then stand them upon,



to examine on what grounds they presume it to be a revelation from GOD? Or else all their confidence is mere presumption; and this light they are so dazzled with, is nothing but an *ignis fatuus*, that leads them continually round in this circle. It is a revelation, because they firmly believe it; and they believe it, because it is a revelation.

*Sect. 11. Enthusiasm fails of Evidence, that the Proposition is from God.*

In all that is of divine revelation, there is need of no other proof, but that it is an inspiration from GOD: for he can neither deceive, nor be deceived. But how shall it be known, that any proposition in our minds, is a truth infused by GOD; a truth that is revealed to us by him, which he declares to us, and therefore we ought to believe? Here it is that enthusiasm fails of the evidence it pretends to. For men thus possessed, boast of a light whereby, they say, they are enlightened, and brought into the knowledge of this or that truth. But if they know it to be a truth, they must know it to be so either by its own self-evidence to natural reason, or by the rational proofs that make it out to be so. If they see and know it to be a truth either of these two ways, they in vain suppose it to be a revelation. For they know it to be true by the same way that any other man naturally may know that it is so, without the help of revelation. For thus all the truths, of what kind soever, that men uninspired are enlightened with, came into their minds, and are established there. If they say they know it to be true, because it is a revelation from GOD, the reason is good: but then it will be demanded, how they know it to be a revelation from GOD. If they say by the light it brings with it, which shines bright in their minds, and they cannot resist; I beseech them to consider, whether this be any more than what we have taken notice of



already, *viz.* that it is a revelation, because they strongly believe it to be true. For all the light they speak of is but a strong, though ungrounded persuasion of their own minds, that it is a truth. For rational grounds from proofs, that it is a truth, they must acknowledge to have none; for then it is not received as a revelation, but upon the ordinary grounds that other truths are received: and if they believe it to be true, because it is a revelation, and have no other reason for its being a revelation, but because they are fully persuaded, without any other reason, that it is true, they believe it to be a revelation, only because they strongly believe it to be a revelation; which is a very unsafe ground to proceed on, either in our tenets or actions: and what readier way can there be to run ourselves into the most extravagant errors and miscarriages, than thus to set up fancy for our supreme and sole guide, and to believe any proposition to be true, any action to be right, only because we believe it to be so? The strength of our persuasions is no evidence at all of their own rectitude: crooked things may be as stiff and inflexible as straight; and men may be as positive and peremptory in error as in truth. How come else the untractable zealots in different and opposite parties? For if the light, which every one thinks he has in his mind, which in this case is nothing but the strength of his own persuasion, be an evidence that it is from God, contrary opinions may have the same title to be inspirations; and God will be not only the Father of lights, but of opposite and contradictory lights, leading men contrary ways; and contradictory propositions will be divine truths, if an ungrounded strength of assurance be an evidence, that any proposition is a divine revelation.

*Sect. 12. Firmness of Persuasion, no Proof that any Proposition is from God.*

This cannot be otherwise, whilst firmness of per-

suasion is made the cause of believing, and confidence of being in the right, is made an argument of truth. St. Paul himself believed he did well, and that he had a call to it, when he persecuted the Christians, whom he confidently thought in the wrong: but yet it was he, and not they, who were mistaken. Good men are men still, liable to mistakes, and are sometimes warmly engaged in errors, which they take for divine truths, shining in their minds with the clearest light.

*Sect. 13. Light in the Mind, what.*

Light, true light in the mind is, or can be nothing else but the evidence of the truth of any proposition; and if it be not a self-evident proposition, all the light it has, or can have, is from the clearness and validity of those proofs upon which it is received. To talk of any other light in the understanding, is to put ourselves in the dark, or in the power of the prince of darkness, and, by our own consent, to give ourselves up to delusion, to believe a lie: for if strength of persuasion be the light which must guide us, I ask, how shall any one distinguish between the delusions of Satan, and the inspirations of the Holy Ghost? He can transform himself into an angel of light. And they who are led by this son of the morning, are as fully satisfied of the illumination, *i. e.* are as strongly persuaded that they are enlightend by the Spirit of God, as any one who is so: they acquiesce and rejoice in it, are acted by it; and nobody can be more sure, nor more in the right, (if their own strong belief may be judge), than they.

*Sect. 14. Revelation must be judged of by Reason.*

He therefore that will not give himself up to all the extravagancies of delusion and error, must bring this guide of his light within to the trial. God,

when he makes the prophet, does not unmake the man : he leaves all his faculties in their natural state, to enable him to judge of his inspirations, whether they be of divine original or no. When he illuminates the mind with supernatural light, he does not extinguish that which is natural. If he would have us assent to the truth of any proposition, he either evidences that truth by the usual methods of natural reason, or else makes it known to be a truth, which he would have us assent to, by his authority, and convinces us that it is from him, by some marks which reason cannot be mistaken in. Reason must be our last judge and guide in every thing. I do not mean, that we must consult reason, and examine whether a proposition revealed from God can be made out by natural principles ; and if it cannot, that then we may reject it : but consult it we must, and by it examine whether it be a revelation from God or no : and if reason finds it to be revealed from God, reason then declares for it, as much as for any other truth, and makes it one of her dictates. Every conceit that thoroughly warms our fancies, must pass for an inspiration, if there be nothing but the strength of our persuasions, whereby to judge of our persuasions. If reason must not examine their truth by something extrinsical to the persuasions themselves, inspirations and delusions, truth and falsehood, will have the same measure, and will not be possible to be distinguished.

*Sect. 15. Belief no Proof of Revelation.*

If this internal light, or any proposition which under that title we take for inspired, be conformable to the principles of reason, or to the word of God, which is attested revelation, reason warrants it, and we may safely receive it for true, and be guided by it in our belief and actions : if it receive no testimony nor evidence from either of these rules, we cannot take it for a revelation, or so much as for true, till we



have some other mark that it is a revelation, besides our believing that it is so. Thus we see the holy men of old, who had revelations from GOD, had something else besides that internal light of assurance in their own minds, to testify to them that it was from GOD. They were not left to their own persuasions alone, that those persuasions were from GOD, but had outward signs to convince them of the author of those revelations. And when they were to convince others, they had a power given them to justify the truth of their commission from heaven; and by visible signs to assert the divine authority of a message they were sent with. Moses saw the bush burn without being consumed, and heard a voice out of it. This was something besides finding an impulse upon his mind to go to Pharaoh, that he might bring his brethren out of Egypt; and yet he thought not this enough to authorize him to go with that message, till GOD, by another miracle of his rod turned into a serpent, had assured him of a power to testify his mission by the same miracle repeated before them whom he was sent to. Gideon was sent by an angel to deliver Israel from the Midianites, and yet he desired a sign to convince him that this commission was from GOD. These, and several the like instances to be found among the prophets of old, are enough to shew, that they thought not an inward seeing or persuasion of their own minds, without any other proof, a sufficient evidence that it was from GOD, though the Scripture does not every where mention their demanding or having such proofs.

§ 16. In what I have said, I am far from denying that GOD can, or doth sometimes enlighten men's minds in the apprehending of certain truths, or excite them to good actions, by the immediate influence and assistance of the Holy Spirit, without any extraordinary signs accompanying it. But in such cases too, we have reason and Scripture, unerring rules, to know whether it be from GOD or no. Where the



truth embraced is consonant to the revelation in the written word of GOD, or the action conformable to the dictates of right reason or holy writ, we may be assured that we run no risk in entertaining it as such; because though perhaps it be not an immediate revelation from GOD, extraordinarily operating on our minds, yet we are sure it is warranted by that revelation which he has given us of truth. But it is not the strength of our private persuasion within ourselves, that can warrant it to be a light or motion from heaven; nothing can do that, but the written word of GOD without us, or that standard of reason, which is common to us with all men. Where reason or Scripture is express for any opinion or action, we may receive it as of divine authority; but it is not the strength of our own persuasions which can by itself give it that stamp. The bent of our own minds may favour it as much as we please; that may shew it to be a fondling of our own, but will by no means prove it to be an offspring of heaven, and of divine original.

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